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# HEALTH AND RELIGION



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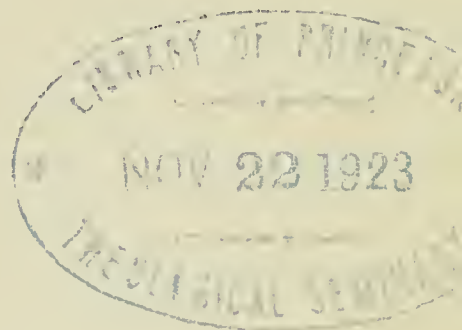
BY THE REV.

✓  
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'THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND MENTAL  
AND SPIRITUAL HEALING'



WITH A FOREWORD BY

THE RIGHT REV.

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## FOREWORD

BY THE  
BISHOP OF EDINBURGH

THERE is no subject of more importance and interest than that suggested by the title of this book. The author, our Senior Chaplain at the Cathedral, is well equipped for dealing with it. As a fully qualified doctor, bearing the Medical Degree of our own University of Edinburgh, and as a priest of many years' standing, with experience in mental and spiritual healing, he combines the qualities necessary to any one who would teach Christian people on the subject of Health and Religion. The book speaks for itself and needs no words of commendation from me. I hope that many will read it, and I am sure that no one will do so without feeling the better for its wise counsels.

GEORGE  
*Bishop of Edinburgh*

## PREFACE

I AM indebted to the Rev. Chancellor Perry, Principal of the Theological College of the Scottish Episcopal Church, for his kindness in reading the MS. of this book, and for some valuable advice as to its subject matter, for which, however, he is in no way responsible. To many other teachers I am also no doubt indebted for many ideas which have passed into my mind and become my own, but where I have consciously borrowed, I have acknowledged my debt in the text.

C. O'FLAHERTY

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# HEALTH AND RELIGION

## CHAPTER I

### THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN NATURE

THE title of this book, "Health and Religion," calls for some preliminary definition of terms. Health I take to mean two things: harmony of working within the organism, internal health; and successful adaptation of the organism to its environment without. By religion I understand the conscious relationship of mankind with God. The health of a human being is a larger thing than the health of an animal, inasmuch as human nature is something more than animal nature. The environment to which man seeks adaptation is not merely physical, but also mental and spiritual. And the health of one who believes that his environment is God, "for in Him we live and move and have our being," necessarily involves the question of his relation to God, that is, his religion. So the consideration of health and religion leads to the examination of human nature

and of the revelation of God which man has received through Jesus Christ. We are led to the desire to know ourselves, and to know God.

We turn our attention first to the examination of our human nature, its composition and capacities. The quest for self-knowledge leads us to travel far, and many guides are available to conduct us on different sections of the way. The anatomist describes for us this body of ours, and explains the relationships of its various parts, the framework of bones, and ligaments, and joints, and muscles, and skin; the various organs, glands, etc., the blood-vessels and lymphatics, and the intricate system of nerves which has its great centres of sensation and movement and control in that not yet fully explored region, the brain. To the help of the anatomist has come mightily the histologist with his microscope, who displays to our wondering eyes the minute order and arrangement of the tiny units of which our bodies are composed, the cells. He shows the structure of our nerve-cells and fibres, the intricate arrangements of the cell-layers in the eye, and in the ear, the wonderful organs of sense, the arrangement of the contractile

tissues which make movement possible, and the various kinds of cells which are found in the blood, and whose activity justifies us in calling the blood not merely a fluid, but an organ. The anatomist and histologist, however, are concerned merely with structure: they describe the form of the body, but not its activities. Our guide to the active working of the body is the physiologist. He describes the body with special reference to its multitudinous activity as a living thing, how movement is effected by the contraction of muscle-fibres in obedience to nerve-impulses which travel down the motor-nerves from motor-centres in the nervous system. He describes the difference between the voluntary muscles which contract in obedience to conscious commands, and the involuntary muscles (part of the structure of all our internal organs) the action of which is not normally within our conscious control. He describes the mechanism of sensation, *e.g.* how sensations of touch travel from the toe or finger to the cortex of the brain, and examines the working of the special senses such as the eye and ear. He enquires into the specialised work of the different organs, and asks how it is that an acid digestive



fluid is secreted by the stomach, and an alkaline juice by the intestines. He discusses the function of the liver and spleen, and with the aid of the physiological chemist explores the activities, still little known, of the ductless glands and the purposes of their internal secretions. This is a new and important field of exploration which has lately been discovered, and great hopes are raised that as we come to discover more fully the activities of such glands as the thyroid, thymus, the pituitary body, the suprarenals, etc., we shall come to understand more fully the phenomena of growth, and the balance of health in the body, and so be able to modify the course of diseases that have hitherto baffled the physician.

Both the anatomist and the physiologist, as they describe the structure and the working of the human body, refer us to the biologist, whose province it is to study the anatomy and life-processes of all the members of the animal kingdom among whom man finds a place. And the biologist, in examining the phenomena of life, falls back upon the work of the physicist, whose business it is to analyse and describe the properties of "life-

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less matter,” and to formulate chemical and physical “laws,” *i.e.* descriptions of the relations of the different bodies to one another. It is necessary to keep in mind, in view of the frequent confusions of thought on the point, that a “law of nature” is nothing more or less than a description of how things are observed to happen in the natural world. As observation becomes more accurate, and descriptions are enabled by better instruments to become more closely approximate to the truth, the laws of nature are from time to time restated. Scientists are at this moment engaged in the task of restating the law of gravitation, in view of Einstein’s theory of relativity.

All our scientific guides to truth take something for granted, some basis on which they found their science. Beyond these data they do not go, the territory beyond the datum line they leave to other enquirers. Each science has its own field in which it analyses and describes. Science never attempts to give a complete explanation, for it always takes certain data for granted, such as “life,” “matter,” “energy.” If you ask a scientist what matter is, he will tell you it is none of his business to answer

such a question ; he leaves that to the metaphysician.

Starting from a point of time millions upon millions of years ago, after the sun had hurled off a nebula which in process of time became the earth, with just these substances on its cooling surface, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, which were necessary for what was to be, science has with vast ingenuity pieced together a history of the world's development.

First are seen at work chemical and physical reactions, the effect upon matter of such forms of energy as heat and light, or in their absence, cold and darkness. Gradually there are traced the deposits of mineral substances, and the formations of crystals, new products being formed from previous raw materials.

Then there is observed to emerge a new thing, *life*. The simplest living thing has a quite different order of being from the lifeless materials out of which it emerged ; it has some measure of independence, some power of adaptation to its environment ; some power of purposeful movement, of experiment, of behaviour, of growth, of development, of reproduction ; there are in



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it the elements of freedom, self-determination, creative activity.

Further in the history of the world a new thing emerges, so gradually that it is impossible to draw a line and say, "before this it was not, after this it is"; but certainly if language means anything it is a new thing which once did not exist on the earth as such, *Consciousness*. There was no consciousness in the primeval interactions of gases, or in the rocks as they were laid down in their beds. But it may well be that just as out of the raw materials of physical, chemical, and electric energy an entirely new thing "life" emerged, so out of living operations there gradually developed in an ascending scale, a series of living characteristics which at last appear undeniably as mental; and a living creature is seen possessed of *consciousness*, which embraces the capacity to choose and determine and attempt, will; the capacity to like and dislike, affection; and the capacity to understand and think, intellect.

The study of consciousness is the task of the psychologist. He, as other scientists, explains nothing ultimately; he describes. He tells, *e.g.*, how out of the raw antecedents

of unconscious instincts there have been developed the human attributes of emotion, the affections, the sentiments; and how there has come to be in man something which characterises him as different from all other animals, and earns him the title "homo sapiens," viz. wisdom, the power to discriminate consciously, and make judgments as to the value of things, to conceive such ideas as the Good, the True, the Beautiful, and to order his life with regard to an ideal.

Again a new phenomenon emerges out of consciousness; man pondering upon himself and the universe in which he finds himself, has so used his human characteristic of wisdom that he has become aware not only of himself and external nature, but of God. God-consciousness is a practically universal phenomenon of the human mind; even the most savage and backward tribes have this common mental feature, some idea, however rudimentary, of a higher power; "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."

Here science draws its line. The psychologist describes how man thinks, but does not profess to explain how God has come to be the universal object of man's regard.



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The study of comparative religion shows us indeed that just as man has risen higher in the scale of development, just in proportion as he has transcended his brute-nature and developed his distinctly human attributes, his conception of God has become more enlarged, more noble, more exalted. And as we trace the development of man's religious ideas, we see them gradually reaching forward in the minds of poets, philosophers and prophets, toward their culmination in the fulness of God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, in Whom human and divine consciousness meet in perfect unison.

God-consciousness is, then, a characteristic of the normal human mind. And we need not be afraid or ashamed if those who analyse history tell us that religious ideas have developed out of such mean beginnings as cowering fear before the forces of nature, and the instinct of self-preservation. Indeed we might have guessed as much from certain degenerate types of religion which we may still observe in civilised man, and which take the form known as "fire-insurance." That all the beautiful flowers of the human mind have drawn their nourishment from

roots embedded in the common soil is nothing to be ashamed of. It is so many millions of years since our ancestor, the amœba, first rolled about in the ooze of the pond, that we need not be afraid of being branded as nouveaux. Indeed Mother Earth is a most beautiful and loveable ancestress of whom we might wish ourselves more worthy. She is a wise if stern mother, and if her human child had been attentive to learn all the lessons which she teaches, much discord and disease and disaster would have been saved. For it is a significant truth, of which Prof. Arthur Thompson reminds us, that in wild nature there is no organic disease.

If we look back over the earth's history without fear we may learn much that is of real value, *e.g.* we may trace a continual tendency to reach out to something new and unknown, something always further on, the tendency to adventurous exploration. And the explorers have been those who were not best suited to their present and therefore seek a new environment. A fish forsakes the water for the mud, and develops lungs. The reptile dissatisfied with earth grows wings and becomes a bird. The rest of the fishes, content with water-life, remain

stationary. So some, by a rudimentary power of choice, advance ; others remain stagnant ; others again, like the mammal who became a whale, look back and degenerate. And in the life of man, it is just this upward-striving tendency which has led us out of brutal savagery and slavish fear, into such civilisation as we have reached, and the sense of our relationship with God. Because he is man, and not a brute, man cries, " O God, show me Thyself." He recognises, behind all the outward forms, a creative mind, a Father's heart, not interrupting nature's course at intervals, but continually labouring, in one unbroken creative operation from the first brooding of the Spirit of God upon the face of the deep, on and on through the ages until in man God had made ready a being capable of receiving Himself. And at last, in the fulness of time, through the courageous obedience of the blessed Virgin, God took nature into consummated union with Himself, and God and Man became one in Jesus Christ.

*Note.*—For the use of the word "emerge" in the description of the evolutionary process, I am indebted to Professor Lloyd Morgan's illuminating

presidential address given to the newly-created psychological section of the British Association in Edinburgh in 1921. He shows how the new types that appear in ascending progression upon the evolutionary scale, are not merely the products of their united raw materials, but reveal new properties that could not have been predicted from the examination of those raw materials. Such "emergent" characteristics are life, consciousness, judgment. There is no need to postulate at each stage a new special creative act of God. Those new types are stages in one constant and unremitting creative labour of God, the Source of all being.



## CHAPTER II

### MAN'S RELATION TO GOD

IN the last chapter, after defining health as a state of harmonious working within the organism and efficient reaction to its environment, and religion as man's conscious relation to God, we took a rapid bird's-eye view of the course of evolutionary creation as modern science has described it for us, the gradual emergence in an ascending scale of higher and more elaborate forms out of their pre-existent raw materials. At different stages one could note the emergence of a new thing, a higher order, not completely to be accounted for by the raw materials out of which it drew its existence, though the emergence has been so gradual that one cannot draw hard-and-fast lines. We trace living forms emerging from previous inorganic materials, consciousness emerging out of unconscious life, the power of judgment and the awareness of God emerging out of consciousness. The capacity for reverence,

devotion, worship, love, and conscious self-sacrifice, we describe as essentially human characteristics, though we may not say that there is nothing akin to these in the animals, especially those animals which have become closely associated with man, such as the horse and the dog.

There are those who, in their analysis of the human mind, are content to describe the higher in terms of the lower, the human in terms of the animal; just as there are others who tend to explain consciousness in terms of the physiological activities of the body, and others again who would resolve every living bodily activity into an affair of chemistry and physics; but I cannot imagine anyone who by any elaboration of chemical and physical interchanges could profess to account for the Gospel of St John, or the mind of the man who wrote it. Such looking back incurs the danger of reducing man, like Lot's wife, to a pillar of salt. The normal human being always has demanded, and always does demand God, and as man advances out of rude savagery the cry becomes more and more articulate: "O God, show me Thyself." "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for

the living God ; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God ? ” Or, as St Augustine puts it in the oft-quoted words with which he begins his Confessions : “ Thee would man praise ; man, but a particle of Thy creation ; man who bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness that Thou resistest the proud ; yet would man praise Thee ; he but a particle of Thy creation, for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee.” Man’s health has become a larger thing, for his inner harmony involves a relationship with God. God is the supreme factor in man’s environment, for in man spiritual consciousness has emerged, and has lifted him into a new kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, which is within him as well as around ; and health is more than animal fitness : it has grown to mean salvation, that state of wholeness which comes from conscious harmony with God.

Science, which has so widely enlarged our knowledge of the created universe, has helped us correspondingly to enlarge our conception of God. We no longer think of God as an almighty Sultan, issuing effortless “fiats” for the creation of order after



order of created beings ; rather we think of our Lord's word, "My Father worketh hitherto." We think of God labouring in His universal task, the life-giving Spirit constantly in operation, from the primeval brooding on the abyss, elaborating a universe worthy of the exercise of His Divine creative art and wisdom ; and in emergent evolution we begin to see a purpose at work, the formation of an order of beings fit to be called His children, who are growing into fuller consciousness of fellowship with Himself, who answer His love with love, His wise commands with willing obedience, His trust in them with confidence in Him, His patient forbearance towards them with patient forbearance towards one another, His joy in their growing perfection with the dawning vision of His infinite beauty and holiness. If in the beginning the uninhabited stars sang together, in man their song finds words, the unawake creation wakes in man to vocal praise, and man's restlessness is the very condition of his exploring quest, which will never cease till he reaches the haven where he would be, the restful haven of his Father's Home.

If our study of nature has helped us to



a larger view of God, the history of man's religious development is also full of significance. The savage, actuated by blind fear in face of the power of nature, searches to find ways of propitiation, by prayer and sacrifice, and avoidance of dangerous things ; but gradually out of crude and dark beginnings we can trace, as in Israel, the growth of a purer, loftier, more moral conception of God. From worshipping the multitudinous objects of the created universe, he comes to worship the Creator, Who is exalted far above them. God is recognised as the God of righteousness, Who requires just dealing in His people. He is recognised as One supreme God, and the host of tribal deities sink before that recognition into nothingness, and justice becomes enlarged to include fair dealing with the stranger as well as with one's own people. The animal sacrifices continue, but they are no substitute for obedience ; " To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." And the sacrifice ceases to be a way of appeasing an angry God, but is the grateful offering of a forgiven servant. " The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit ; a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt

thou not despise.” “Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations; then shall they offer young bullocks upon Thine altar.”

There grows the sense of God's Majesty and Holiness, and then of His Fatherhood; the feeling of man's duty and moral responsibility, and then of his sonship. But to the Jew the majestic transcendence of God was more apparent than His homely indwelling. “The Lord looked down from heaven to behold the children of men.” He intervenes by mighty judgments, great days of the Lord, which vindicate His righteousness, and His care for the oppressed. But the Lord's seat is in heaven, exalted far above the earth. There is a gulf between, which however is partially bridged by the inspired utterance of the prophet who declares God's will and interprets His meaning, by the ministrations of the priest who enters into the Holy Place with the blood of the sacrifice on behalf of the people, and by the prayers of the righteous. But God is holy, and therefore apart from common things. For the common bears the taint of the unclean. Still, though there was a gulf fixed between

God's holiness and man's sinful nature, there springs and grows in the Jewish consciousness the Messianic hope, the expectation of the coming of the Deliverer, the Anointed King in the succession of the royal lineage of David, who would restore the kingdom in righteousness, and bring in a reign of peace and forgiveness of sins. This expectation of the coming of the Messiah to restore the Kingship to Judah, and vindicate God's purpose for the chosen people, becomes more vivid as the days approach, both among the Pharisees and among the people. It is on the lips of Simeon and of Zachariah, the father of John Baptist. Men rise on the tip-toe of expectation when a new teacher appears, and ask, "Art thou he that should come, or are we to look for another?" The experience of the Jewish race forces into their consciousness the sure and certain hope of the coming of the Christ.

Outside the Jewish race one can trace the development of religious belief in other nations, among the Greeks, for example, where there was in early days the worship of the powers of nature, then the conception of the gods lifted up and apart from mundane affairs, the Olympian deities, occasionally



intervening among men, protecting or pursuing with vengeance, but apart and above. There arises the sense of responsibility, of destiny, of the grim working of the curse of nemesis upon offenders and their families, the sense of doom which sounds the note of melancholy in the tragedies of Sophocles, while in Plato we see the conception of two worlds; the upper, the real world of absolute ideas, the eternal world of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful; and the lower transient world of restless change and evanescent phenomena. Between these two there seems to be no bridge, but there spring up a host of mystery-cults, whose purpose is to penetrate through the darkness, to pass through veil after veil by successive processes of purification and initiation, till at last within the final veil the human and the divine shall meet.

With such foreshadowings the Eastern, the Greek, and the Latin world were full (for one cannot miss out what has been called the Messianic poem of Vergil, the 4th Eclogue) and the human consciousness of God's operations was being prepared for a crowning revelation. When the fulness of time was come, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, lived,

taught, suffered, and died upon the Cross, and from the Incarnation the world has dated its years anew. Before was B.C.—ever since, there have been the years of the Lord. That period of thirty-three years with its three years of ministry and teaching, have been in fact the turning-point of human history. The religion of Jesus Christ has won its way through every possible opposition to its status as the professed religion of the civilised world, while it has also modified the religions of the East. We believe that in Jesus Christ the desire of all nations has come.

We may regard our Lord as the supreme product of emergent evolution, in whom as its perfect representative the created universe becomes perfectly God-conscious by pre-eminence, “the first-born of all creation” in whose human nature the Father has at last begotten a son who answers completely to His will ; or, looking from the other side we may say that in Jesus Christ, through the human nature which has at last been perfectly adapted for His purpose, God has revealed supremely His own Nature and Being, that God, ever immanent in His creation and ever transcending it, has made

the nature of Jesus the point at which God and His creation coincide. In Christ the manhood has been taken into God, for the sake of all mankind, and may we not add, for the sake of the whole world out of which man has emerged? May we not see in the Incarnation a birth which will, as its glory becomes fully revealed, justify to the full the age-long travail-pangs of nature, and prove an achievement worthy of the creative energy of the Spirit of God?

But, without letting our thoughts range too widely, let us turn our attention to the experience of our Lord's disciples. What is in the consciousness of the apostles, as shown in the Acts and the Epistles? The central fact of their knowledge is that they are a company of people possessed by the Holy Spirit. When Ananias and Sapphira bring their money to the apostles, pretending that the part is the whole, their pretence is shown to be a lie, not unto man, but to the Holy Ghost, and the shock of their exposed guilt kills them. When the apostles deliberate as to the terms on which non-Jewish converts are to be admitted into the Church, their finding is couched in these words: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."



They know that they have been filled with the Holy Ghost since Pentecost. They promise, as St Peter voiced it to the multitude on that very day, that all who repent and believe shall be admitted into the company of the Church by baptism for the remission of their sins, and shall be filled also with the Holy Ghost ; “ for the promise is for you and for your children, and for those who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” When Philip the Evangelist preaches to the Samaritans, he baptizes them after their conversion, and thereupon two apostles, St John and St Peter, come down from Jerusalem to impart to the baptized converts the Holy Spirit by the laying-on of Hands. It becomes the experience of the Church that the Holy Ghost is given through the laying-on of the apostles’ hands. The active agent in all the activities of the Church is the Holy Spirit ; so much so, that there is in their mind no such thing as an isolated Christian ; by baptism they have been incorporated into a new Body. They are members, not only individuals, living a new life which is not their own, but the common inheritance of all the members together, the life of Christ in them all, ministered by the

Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost has become common to all. The barrier between the all-holy God and His human servants has been dissolved. God has shown Himself as the Servant, and the disciples He names not servants but friends, inasmuch as He has admitted them to a knowledge of His counsels. A new race has emerged, not traceable any longer by natural descent, but called, and to be called, out of every nation and colour and status, into a new *genus*, the people of God's possession, a people aware of God's in-dwelling, and surrendering their whole life to His control, no longer conformed to this world, but, in conscious reaction to their environment, being transformed by the renewing of their mind into an inner knowledge of the love and purpose of God. They have been quickened into newness of life. They are in Christ a new creation.

As the disciples were vividly conscious of the fact that they were, with all their diversities of gifts and characteristics, essentially one through the unifying presence in them all of the one Holy Spirit, they were also perfectly well aware of the sequence of events by which this had come to pass.



It followed from the incarnate life of Jesus, His promises, His at-one-ing death, His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension. As St Peter put it to the multitude on the Day of Pentecost: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens, but he saith himself, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.' Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The same consciousness of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, due to the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ, shines through every letter of St Paul. The 1st Epistle of St Peter is full of this same thought (1 Pet. i. 1-12), St John is full of it, see the opening of his 1st Epistle. It is the burden of the apostolic message to the world: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and

was manifested to us ; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ ; and these things we write unto you that your joy may be full."

The disciples had understood very little of our Lord while He was with them in the flesh. The crucifixion had shattered all their hopes, and left them without any message for the world, but with only the experience of a dear teacher done to death, the rankling sense of their desertion of Him in His hour of need, and the fear of their own capture and death which kept them cowering behind locked doors. The overwhelming fact of the Risen Christ talking with them time after time, sensible, contrary to all expectations to their eyes and touch, had revolutionised their whole attitude, and the experience of Pentecost had completed their equipment. Thenceforth fear of man has no place in them. Neither the vindictive pursuing hate of the Jews, nor the sneers of the cultured Greek, nor the dread machinery of the Roman law, could deflect them from their unflinching testimony. They share the

Communion of the life of Christ, and no power on earth or hell is strong enough to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.

Two clear purposes stand out in the Apostolic Church, corresponding to two final commands of Jesus :

1. To abide in Christ, and let Him abide in them, by the communion of His life, vouchsafed in the Sacraments.

2. To carry Christ's life to all the world, that all nations might learn of the atonement, the reconciliation of man to God, and might be incorporated into the company of His Church, and enjoy the fellowship of Christ's Spirit, and the participation of His Life.

Their aim is to labour, by the work of the ministry in union with the Holy Ghost, at the building up of Christ's Body the Church out of all mankind, until it reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and be made, in the finished work of the Holy Ghost, a perfect unity, the objective counterpart of God's mind, the Bride made ready and fit for eternal union with the Word, the Son of God.

As we study the ministry and teaching of our Lord, and His commission to His



apostles, it becomes clear that He expects two things of His mystical Body, the Church, corresponding to two characteristics of His natural Body. The first is wholeness of being, the state of health. As He never knew in His own Body disease or sin, for He was the fulfilment of the type, the Lamb without blemish, so He provided, by His Spirit's endowment, the means of healing for man's whole nature. He had gone about healing the sick by spiritual power, never refusing healing to any who sought it of Him, and He commands His Church to continue this work by such methods as the laying-on of hands, and the anointing with oil. He had healed the minds of men by His illuminating teaching, and by the release of those darkened by the possession of evil spirits; and He commands His Church to preach the Gospel, and to cast out devils. He had ministered God's forgiveness of sins, proclaiming that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins; and, in the act of inbreathing the Holy Spirit upon His apostles, He gives them the commission: "Whosoever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." He endows

His Church with the Spirit of Life, with the command to carry the Life unto all the world for the healing of mankind in body, mind, and spirit. For He requires of all the members of His Church what they can only have by the presence and power of His Spirit possessing them, namely, health and holiness. Thus the cleavage is no longer between God the Holy and man the earthly creature; but between God indwelling in His Church on the one hand, and on the other hand the rest of mankind, who still await incorporation into Christ; between man regenerate and sanctified by the Spirit, and the old unregenerate nature which in its downward pulling tendency runs counter to the redeemed nature, and must be mortified, that the members of Christ may be free.

The second requirement is that His Church, like His natural Body, shall bear the Cross. As Jesus had revealed the Father's love and labour by a life of utter self-giving, even to the Agony and the Crucifixion, so He requires of His members, because He has made them strong and whole, to bear the world's burden in their turn, to carry the Cross, the suffering which the still unreconciled enemies heap upon the Church, to

continue in patient labour, unified with the labour of Christ, until by the magnet of Christ's love in them, all men shall be drawn to Him, and through Him, to the Father.

The Church, looking towards God, is the Church forgiven, healed, made new; and looking toward man, it is to carry forgiveness, healing, and regeneration. The joy set before the Church is the joy which sustained Christ in His agony, and made it all well worth His while, the certainty that by faithful endurance the end would be gained, and all mankind brought into the inheritance of God's kingdom.

Christ requires us to be strong, which we cannot be in ourselves, therefore He puts within our reach the means of health, which we will consider later.



## CHAPTER III

### HEALTH, ITS MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

WE have described health as the harmonious working within the organism, and the successful adaptation of the organism to its environment. As the ladder of evolution is ascended health becomes a larger and more complicated thing, as the structure of the organism becomes more elaborate and its functions more differentiated, and as its horizon becomes more extended. The life-processes of the simplest animals may be described in terms of chemistry and physics. But further up the scale the psychic factor enters in more and more. For example, the digestion and assimilation of food, by which the body is maintained, becomes more and more complicated as development proceeds. It used to be thought that the digestive activities of a dog could be sufficiently explained by the mechanical stimulation of the food producing an outflow of digestive juices which acted chemically

on the food, the mechanical movements of the muscular walls of stomach and intestine, and the reflex nervous stimulation set up by the sight, smell, taste, and touch of the food. But experiments have proved that there is, even in the lower animals, another factor, the emotional. The sight of food will make the gastric glands of a hungry dog secrete actively. But if when that dog is about to eat, a cat which the dog dislikes is put beside it, the dog's annoyance and rage at the cat will cause a stoppage of the proper gastric flow, and interfere with the dog's digestion. The dog's digestive acts are no longer those simply of physical absorption and chemical reaction, nor are they physical, chemical, and nervously reflex only, but they are governed by a new and higher factor, which in the dog we may call mental. And as the scale ascends the mental factor becomes still more predominant. The hungry child secretes gastric juice at the sight of food, but if he is disappointed and has to wait long, the presence at last of the delayed food in the stomach produces no response and the child cannot digest it. And the interference with digestion caused

by anxiety, anger, fear, or grief, is familiar to us all. But digestion is not the only function affected by the emotions. Every activity of the body is so affected. And prolonged derangement of function, due to emotional disturbance, results in actual changes in the tissues, and causes what is called disease.

Health, therefore, for the human being involves not merely a normal working of the various muscles and nerves and glands and organs of the body secured by regular food, physical exercise, and proper rest. All these things are necessary, but they are not enough. For a healthy man requires a healthy mind, and he must therefore have proper mental food, healthy things to think about, due mental exercise; he should occupy his mind with wholesome thinking, wholesome desires, and the wholesome use of his will, and proper mental rest, absence of worry, anxiety, fear, depression, and all undue emotional disturbance.

It is the last that in these days of bustle and stress and insecurity people find it most difficult to come by. Consequently, one of the outstanding features of modern



civilisation is the great prevalence of nervous weakness and emotional instability. Power of resistance to the wear and tear of life has decreased, while the wear and tear have increased. Every new labour-saving invention opens out new vistas of increased labour. With every new convenience there appears a new source of worry. This point is sufficiently illustrated by the one word, telephone. And as factories accumulate through the world to supply the world's need, want becomes no less, insecurity preys on men's minds, and the struggle for existence becomes fiercer. "Men's hearts are failing them from fear." And fear in a myriad forms is of the essence of neurasthenia.

It is this condition of affairs that make men question the value of civilisation. Has civilisation become a juggernaut to crush out the lives of the civilised? Or is there in civilisation such a mixture of good and evil conditions that by judicious reforms the good may be conserved and the evil reduced? This is the hope of the reformer. But we are beginning to understand that the mere amelioration of conditions is no sufficient reform. Reform must include persons as well as environ-



ment. A new outlook on life is necessary, for the results of pride, covetousness, ambition, cruelty, envy, jealousy, self-seeking cannot pass away until these diseases of character are put away. In social and in private life what is required is the cultivation of the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. For in man there is a higher factor to govern his life-processes than the laws of chemistry, physics, physiology, and psychology. The factors that would make him a healthy animal, or a healthy thinking animal, are not sufficient to make him a healthy man. For the crowning characteristic of man is God-consciousness. Therefore for healthy manhood there is involved a proper conscious relationship to God and his fellow-beings. Love to God and one's neighbours becomes a law of health. The cure of neurasthenia is to be found in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." And the way into that peace has been opened for us by the coming of Jesus Christ. The cure for civilisation is to be found in Christianity, and the health of the individual is realised when he comes

to himself in the realisation of his membership in Christ.

Fortunately, the health of the individual has not to wait altogether on the health of the body corporate of humanity. The Incarnation proves that man may grow to perfection in the most antagonistic human environment. On the other hand, it is by the multiplication of individuals who have found the secret of life in Christ Jesus that society is to be saved. The leaven will eventually leaven the lump, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

When health has been impaired, when there is discord within, and the organism is unable to adjust itself successfully to its environment, a healer is called in. The duty of the healer is often described as "assisting nature." In no case is the healer the source of cure, he merely puts the patient in the best possible condition for the patient's own vitality to assert itself. There is in every one a gift of life, which life is from God and depends upon God. And one of the characteristics of life is the tendency to repair. As long as a body is alive the tendency to repair is always present. It

only ceases when life departs from the body. It is the life that effects the healing, the healer merely assists. His assistance is important because without his aid the patient's vitality may not be sufficient to overcome the resistance which the illness makes. And the aid of a healer is generally necessary if recovery is not to be delayed.

Of healers there are many kinds, but we may divide them roughly into three classes; physical, mental, and spiritual, according to the means of help which they bring to bear upon the case. The physical healers are the physicians and surgeons, and all the varieties of specialists into which these two may be divided. Their work is to consider the physical constitution and the physical means available for supporting it. The surgeon has his array of instruments and dressings for operative and manipulative treatment. The surgeon does not repair a broken leg; he sets it in a favourable position, so that when the broken fragments of the bone unite by the repairing activity of the body, the result may be a straight instead of a deformed limb. There are some who, in their enthusiastic advocacy of spiritual



and mental healing, would deny any place to surgical operation. But, although it may be conceded that we have tended perhaps to resort too much to the knife, it is undoubtedly true that surgical operations have been the means of saving thousands of lives. For example, if a patient is suffering from acute appendicitis, the repairing activity of the body comes into play, and an abscess in the appendix is the centre of a war which is waged between the body and the poisonous organisms which have attacked it. During the war there is a considerable danger that the abscess in the appendix may burst and the infection be spread all over the peritoneum, a highly absorptive surface, causing general blood-poisoning and death before the defensive resources of the body can successfully cope with the situation. Therefore the surgeon removes the inflamed appendix before it bursts, and thus removes the whole invading army, leaving the body the much simpler task of repairing a clean wound. Obviously in such a case the surgeon is a most valuable assistant to nature, and we rightly consider his work God-inspired. Similarly the physician with his medicines assists, *e.g.*, by stimulating the



action of a heart whose work is too hard for it to accomplish without help, or by supplying some chemical element which the body requires and lacks. He stands by during the course of a fever and helps to keep up the patient's strength while the battle with the disease rages within. And as physiological discovery advances, he is ever finding new ways of assisting the patient. But the capable physician and surgeon are well aware that the patient is not merely an animated body. They know that the personal factor is of supreme importance, and they are anxious that all mental irritations and anxieties should be removed. They realise the importance of having the sick-room filled, not merely with a physical atmosphere of fresh air and refreshing fragrance of flowers, but even more with a mental atmosphere of confidence and hope and peace. They see the importance, that is to say, of treatment other than physical. They exclude the fussy and distressing visitor, and gladly admit those who bring peace and hope and good cheer. If they know that the clergyman's visit will bring quietness and confidence and a happier outlook to the patient, they will be glad of his co-operation,

but if they suspect the clergyman of frightening and worrying the patient, they will resent his coming. Often when the symptoms suggest that a disquieted mind plays a large part in the illness, they will realise that mental help is needed, and call to their help the power of suggestion.

Suggestion, or the giving of ideas, is now universally recognised as an instrument of great power. As unhealthy, unsettling ideas can be imparted as well as those that are healthy and peaceful, suggestion is seen to be an instrument potent either for good or evil. People used to be afraid of hypnotism, but it is now seen that it is not hypnotism but the ideas given in the hypnotic state that must be carefully watched. Once ideas have taken possession of the mind they dominate the situation, and may overrule and veto the ordinary physiological activities of the body. The pain of a toothache or lumbago may be wiped out of the patient's consciousness. Insomnia can be cured, and depression relieved. But the doctor knows well that the removal of pain, valuable though it be, is not the cure of the disease. The cause of the pain must be dealt with. So with the causes of insomnia and depres-

sion. Very often what the patient most requires is a new outlook on life, a working philosophy adequate to meet the situation, strong enough to stand the strain of experience. And here the need of spiritual help appears. For suggestion can only minister to self-confidence and confidence in the doctor, whereas man's chief need is confidence in God.

The spiritual healer's main object is to help the patient to acquire such a strong and simple confidence in God as will enable him to rise above every fear and depression and anxiety. He has to bring home to the sick man's consciousness the most important and practical facts in the world, the certain love of God, the Almighty Father, the restoring power of the incarnate life of Christ, and the potency of the indwelling grace of His Holy Spirit. For this end he studies the life of Christ, the nature of His mission and work, His promises and the conditions attached to them, His commission to His Church, and the way in which the Church has carried out the Master's orders.

The study of our Lord's works of healing, and of those which have been wrought in the Church in obedience to His command,



shows us that even as mental suggestions dominate the body and alter its working, even so spiritual activity may dominate mind and body alike. One cannot draw a hard and fast line between the mental and the spiritual, any more than we can draw a clean dividing line between the psychical and the physiological, for mind, body, and spirit never act apart. But we may roughly differentiate the spiritual activities as those in which God is deliberately taken into account. Prayer is, of course, mental, but it is something more, it is a conscious association with God. Auto-suggestion, if its subject matter has to do with God, is a spiritual thing, a form of spiritual meditation. If it deals only with the human side of things we do not call it spiritual any longer. And the difference in potency between psychical auto-suggestion and spiritual auto-suggestion or prayer is the difference between the potentialities of self-confidence and confidence in God. Some people, of course, can trust themselves more than they trust God. But the man who has learned to trust God is in an infinitely stronger position than he who has merely learned to trust himself. If trust in God can be evoked to the extent to



which our Lord, and later the apostles evoked it, then similar results may be expected to follow to-day as of old. And the building up of a loving faith in God through Jesus Christ is part of the work of the Church.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

AT the outset of His ministry Jesus proclaimed Himself as the Deliverer. He declared that in Him was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah :

“ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because He anointed me to preach good tidings  
to the poor,  
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the  
captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Release, restoration, liberty, life, these are the burden of His message, these are the gifts which He comes to confer upon a captive, weakened, and maimed humanity. His ministry is entirely consistent, and His mission is to the whole nature of man. The physical side of humanity is weakened and taken captive by disease, due to world-wide failure to observe the laws of health. There

is no room for doubt as to our Lord's attitude to disease. He regards it as an evil thing, a discordant condition interrupting the harmony of life, diabolic in origin. Search the Gospels from end to end, and you will search in vain for any hint from Jesus that disease is sent from God. But more than once He says expressly that it is Satanic. Consequently His attitude was consistently one of attack. The sick were brought to Him singly and in crowds, and the Gospels which give us the account of His practice, show that practice to have been invariably the same, the ministry of deliverance. Never was there a suggestion that the prolongation of illness would work out for the sick man's good, that it would be his opportunity for cultivating faith and resignation and patience. Jesus called out faith and demanded it, not as an aid to remaining ill with contentment, but as a necessary means of overcoming disease. "Dost thou believe that I am able to do this thing?" That is His question, expressed or implied. "According to thy faith be it done unto thee." That is His treatment. "Thy faith hath made thee whole." That is His explanation of the cure. At once we feel the painful contrast

between His ministry and that of the nineteenth-century Church. Imagine a clergyman called in to minister to a woman ill for eighteen years, who has tried many treatments and consulted many physicians in vain. What is his message to her in her discomfort and pain and disability? The doctors have said "incurable," what is the priest to say? Will he reflect the attitude of the physician or of Jesus Christ? There is his dilemma, the challenge to his faith. We know all too well that in a materialistic age the Church has too often failed to affirm a living faith in a living God, and therefore the signs that "follow them that believe" have not appeared, and men say "miracles do not happen." Our Lord says otherwise. The healing of men's bodies was an integral part of His ministry of deliverance. He never regarded the body as an evil thing to be suppressed or an unimportant thing to be neglected. His teaching is truly reflected in that of St Paul, that the body is the temple of the Spirit and therefore to be treated with reverence, and kept in health and order for God's use. But inasmuch as Jesus did not regard the body as a thing by itself, apart from mind and spirit, His healing of



men's bodies was intimately associated with His healing of mind and spirit as well. He was at pains to illuminate men's minds by continual teaching of the truth. He does not confuse simple faith with ignorance. But, demanding faith as an essential for learning, He builds on that foundation a fabric of truth. He is the Teacher, but the Teacher of the whole truth, showing that the visible things are the outward showings of the inward and spiritual, that man's environment is only understood when he realises himself as situated not merely in a physical universe, but in a divine order, the always-present kingdom of heaven. And since physical disease and disorder are associated with sin and failure to live in harmony with God's law, part of His ministry of deliverance takes the form of forgiveness of sin. Here He comes into conflict with the Pharisees, who recognise that the forgiveness of sins is a divine prerogative. But our Lord claims this as a definite part of His mission, for He is ministering release from all man's bondage, and the forgiveness of sins is intimately connected with the deliverance from disease.

It is to be noted, however, that while our

Lord carried healing and restoration to all man's nature, and commanded His Church to do the same, He never suggested that well-being was an end in itself. Though He laboured to give us more abundant life, He taught very definitely that he that loveth his life shall lose it. The only true use of life is to give it in service. We are made whole in order that we may be enabled to serve more efficiently. Never for a moment does our Lord conceal the fact that the service of God in the midst of an apostate world means suffering. Health for the sake of enjoying life is not worth having. But health in order that we may be strong to endure is to be sought by all means. Health and suffering are not antagonistic. But we are to suffer, not because of our weaknesses and ignorances and sins, but being forgiven and delivered from these, we are to be strong to bear the sins of the world. Our Lord was perfect in His wholeness, otherwise He could not have borne the Cross. And having won man's victory on the Cross, He sends out His disciples to the same ministry. Healed themselves by faith in Him, living by the power of His perfect life imparted to them, they are to carry the

Cross daily, and conquer the world's malice by suffering in the power of His love. They are to go forth and draw all men unto Him, preaching the gospel of deliverance, engrafting all who would believe and repent into the body of His Church by baptism, keeping them all in continual union with Him in the Communion of Saints, ministering by His express command the divine forgiveness of sins, healing men's bodies and souls by His Spirit working through them, and continuing in the fellowship of His sufferings as long as the sins of men continue to grieve the Spirit of God. The ministry of Christ is one with the ministry of His Church, the continuity being secured by the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the ministry of deliverance from all that impedes life and the imparting of more abundant life through union with Jesus Christ. This is the Church's vocation to-day as much as on the Day of Pentecost.

## CHAPTER V

### GRACE AND THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

WE have seen that man, distinguished from the animal world by the fact of his God-consciousness, became aware of three things :

1. His responsibility to God. God requires a certain standard of life in man, higher than the brute standard, and this standard was expressed in such forms as the Ten Commandments, indicating a law of worship, of morality, of self-discipline.

2. His failure to live up to the standard, his sense of sin.

3. His need of God's help, without which man's debt of duty could not be paid, nor could any reconciliation be effected. Yet some reconciliation must be found, for man is God's child, and intuitively longs for his Father.

Thence sprang and grew the Messianic hope, which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Jesus fulfilled in His life the standard



required from man by God. None could convict Him of sin. His life was a perfect expression of willing obedience. And He fulfilled the standard of sinless obedience because God was in Him. This the disciples did not understand at first. It was only in the certainty of His resurrection, and in the light of the experience that began at Pentecost, that the disciples came to know that "in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In Christ Jesus, God had revealed Himself, His character as far as manhood could express it, and His attitude towards mankind. And, by taking man's nature into Himself, He had proved that man's nature is essentially good, and capable of complete union with God. And further, by the taking of man's nature eternally into union with Himself, He had provided the means whereby all men might be brought into the realisation of their sonship, that sonship involving both reconciliation and the power of service freely rendered in love.

This conviction came upon the Church, as I have tried to show, as the result of the experience of the Gift of Pentecost. They knew themselves reconciled to God, they

knew themselves possessed and governed by the Holy Spirit, controlled by the Divine Will to which they joyfully surrendered themselves, soul and body, a willing sacrifice, and they found themselves incorporated into a Body, a corporate fellowship, all sharing one Life, the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, and able to transmit that Life by incorporating, according to Christ's command, all others who were willing to believe and surrender themselves to Christ. That is, they were sure of the inflow and transmission of Grace, through certain definite sacramental means, such as Baptism, the Laying-on of Hands, and the Breaking of the Bread.

The question may be asked, and controversy has raged round the point, wherein the Grace, of which the Christian speaks as the distinctive endowment of Christ to His Church, differs from the natural inheritance of inherent goodness which is man's possession from the very fact that God made him, and made him good? As each one of us is endowed with a God-given capacity to think, and is therefore under a corresponding obligation to work out some system of theology for himself, I may state with all due

deference and humility, and willingness to be corrected where I may be in error, the answer that appeals to me, though it may or may not meet with the agreement of others. To me it seems clear that the creative energy of God has been continuously and without interruption at work upon His universe, which while at first it reacted with the lifeless plasticity of the clay to the potter's hand, gradually, as He poured more and more abundant life-power into it, grew to respond with dawning consciousness, until in the light of Christ's revelation, man found himself a son of God, furnished with power of God's supplying to answer to the Father's intention with the free obedience of a loving son. The lifeless world answered the Divine impulse with the mechanical obedience of a billiard-ball to the stroke of the cue in the player's hand, but the human world became gradually aware both of God's will, and of an answering tendency to obedience, thwarted by the unruly working of a habit of self-will. When that self-will is repudiated in repentance, and God's way is trusted and desired, the Christian finds by faith that virtue flows into him from Christ, into whose Body he



has been incorporated, and this virtue enables him to respond freely to the will of God. His response is not the compelled reaction of the lifeless clay, but the willing response of a son, sent with a commission from his Father, Who supplies him with all necessary power and guidance for carrying out his Father's wishes. Grace, then, seems to me to mean the God-given power to live in conscious enjoyment of the status of sonship, and the ability to obey with the freewill that springs from trust and love. This grace, in all its forms, God gives through Jesus Christ, Who has brought our fellowship into light, and it comes to each of us, one by one, by the creative and re-creative operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus in Christ, we are neither tools, nor servants, but sons, enabled by grace to render that willing obedience of love to God, which should be the distinguishing mark of the Christian.

The working out of Grace, therefore, involves two things: (1) on God's part a full and sufficient provision of power and guidance, an ample supply for the son's necessity; and (2) on man's part, a willing and trustful surrender to God's control, a definite self-giving to God, to do His will, and a refusal



to adhere to any sort of self-will which diverges from God : in fact, a death to sin, and a life unto God.

It follows that the means of grace, which we call sacraments, are very different from mere charms. Their efficacy depends upon the co-operation of God and man, and in considering any sacrament we have to think first, is this being done in accordance with the will of God as revealed by Christ, and secondly, is man fulfilling the necessary conditions for receiving the grace of the sacrament ? The second question, which is vital, we shall consider later. At present let us think of the first, the will of God to give grace through material means.

When we think of God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe, we are bound to believe that He does all things with a purpose, that He is using the outward creation as the instruments and channels of His will. The whole world is working out His purpose, and is enabled to do so by power and virtue of His giving. We have thought of one ladder of evolution, by which the creature has climbed from the dust of the earth into the position of conscious relationship with God. But there are other ladders

of divine traffic between earth and heaven, upon which the angelic ascendings and descendings are much more swift than upon the slow ladder of evolving creation. Think, for example, of God's dealings with a grain of wheat. It is a product of divine labour, in which life is embodied in the seed. That seed, sown in the earth, becomes a laboratory, taking the substances of the earth into itself, and using them to build a growing body by cell-multiplication, a new body consisting of root, and stem, and leaf, and presently ears, and fruitage of corn ; all by a co-operation between the life in the seed and the sun, air, rain, and soil. The harvest is yielded up to man, who has been co-operating with the powers of nature for its production. Part of the grain he sets aside for future sowing, for further crops, and part is ground and prepared for bread. Man eats the bread and incorporates it into his body. It is assimilated and is carried in his blood-stream to build up his tissues. Part is used to nourish the brain-cells which he uses when he thinks. Suppose he is thinker and writer, a St John the Divine, or a St Thomas à Kempis, engaged in spiritual meditation and converse with the

Holy Spirit of God. He uses his brain-cells, which have been kept in life by the food which he has taken from the earth, as the instrument whereby he is enabled to embody his spiritual thoughts in words, and give them forth through his fingers with ink, and pen, and paper, to stir the thoughts of men and influence their lives for centuries to come. Or, God may reserve part of the grain for another purpose ; it is offered and taken into the Hands of Christ, Who is using His minister at the altar. He blesses it with His life-giving Spirit, and incorporates it into His spiritual Body, breaks it, as His Body, *i.e.* the vehicle of His life, for distribution to His members, that they, His spiritual members, may feed on His life, and thus continue in their incorporated unity with Him, and with one another in Him, in obedience to His word : “ Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you.” “ Abide in Me, and I in you.” So St Paul writes : “ I speak to wise men ; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ ? For we being many are one



bread, one body—for we are all partakers of that one bread.” The bread, taken from the earth, has been raised to a spiritual power by the Divine operation, and made the bread of souls.

Again there is another ladder made. It has been taught us by science that the human body in its development reproduces the whole history of the evolution of the race. So it was with our great Forerunner, Jesus Christ. His natural body was drawn like ours from the dust of the earth, and He has carried human nature, not only through the vicissitudes of this life unimpaired, but through that dissolution of bodily death, which precedes the re-integration of the spiritual body. In His resurrection-body He showed to His Church that spiritual body, and in it exalted our human nature to the destiny which God had from the beginning intended for it, the place of the son, in whom the Father is well pleased. It is that perfect human nature, tested and found true, victorious over all man’s enemies, that our Lord, still true man as well as true God, shares with us in the sacramental fellowship of His Body the Church, so that we, being made members of that Body,



have access to all the grace which His incarnate Life wrought out on this earth, and through sharing in His human nature, have access to the divine nature, which is eternally united with it. Thus, by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, by the incorporation of the children one by one into the membership of the Church, and by the continual sharing in the sacramental fellowship of the Life which is in His Body the Church, the coming of Christ is revealed to be, not a visit to earth and a departure, but the beginning of a new era of evolution, whereby man is enabled to emerge into his highest state, the state of salvation, of wholeness of being, through conscious fellowship with the power, wisdom, and love of God. In the Church of Christ we come into our heritage as the accepted sons of God.

Now whether we accept this as true or not will depend upon our attitude towards Jesus Christ. The belief in His Deity is the foundation-rock upon which the whole Church is built. But here again, as thinking beings, we have to face the task, which often involves no little pain, of working out our faith, from the beautiful trustfulness of the child who believes because he is told by those whom he trusts

and loves, into the tough enduring conviction of the adult who has thought and struggled and prayed and hammered out his belief on the anvil of experience. To each his own experience by which God leads him home. I had to doubt every article of the Faith before I could come to believe for myself, and on that article relating to our Lord's Person, I went through the Gospels noting every saying of Jesus which seemed to amount to a claim to be more than man. Many of the sayings and doings the apostles admittedly could not understand, but they noted and remembered them. Taken together they left me with no shadow of doubt that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, in a different sense from that in which other men might call themselves such. The disciples believed to a certain extent, but their hopes were shattered by the Crucifixion. If that incident had ended their experience of association with Jesus, there could never have been any Gospel.<sup>1</sup> The record ended in their master's defeat and their shame. Nothing but the Resurrection, a fact which they found it very hard to believe at first,

<sup>1</sup> See on this subject "The Mind of the Disciples" by the Rt. Rev. Neville Talbot (Bp. of Pretoria).

could have changed their consciousness of shattered hope and bitter loss into the unalterable certainty and absolute fearlessness with which the apostles preached the victory of Christ over sin and death, and the forgiveness of sins through His atoning sacrifice. The accounts which we have in the Acts and the Epistles are contemporary history. If they are based on a hallucination, then the religion which is the highest that man has known is grounded on a hallucination. That is too absurd for me to believe. The Resurrection as a fact is congruous with Christ's life and character. I am sure that He claimed to be God; either the claim was true, or it was madness or blasphemy; and I cannot believe that the noblest religion in history has sprung out of madness or blasphemy. I cannot resist the conclusion that our Lord Jesus Christ is very God and very Man, of one substance with the Father, the Father's agent in creation and in redemption, by whose Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection, the way has been made open for all mankind into the heaven-state of conscious reconciliation and fellowship with God the Father.

When one has reached conviction, by



whatever path one may be led, and has come to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and God, as well as Saviour and Friend, it becomes an easy matter to trust the sacraments as means of grace. We only require to know, do they rest on His authority? The familiar analogy of the cheque is quite applicable. The cheque, say for £100, its paper and ink, has an intrinsic value of next to nothing, but if it bears a genuine signature, and if he who wrote it is good for the amount mentioned, the value that it carries—its sacramental value—is £100, and it is the only value about which the recipient cares. Its value rests upon the signature and the credit of the sender; not upon the quality of the paper, but what the sender uses it for. So a sacrament rests not on the value of its material channel, but on the promise of our Lord. If He appointed it, His credit is sufficient for us. Or, if this be too prosaic an analogy, think how the child's kiss, the material pressure of lips upon a cheek, conveys to the mother a spiritual thing, her little one's love. So with the handshake, which, truly used, carries friendship. The sacramental principle is familiar to us by daily use.



Of each sacramental channel of grace we may ask, what is its origin? Can we trace it to our Lord? Did the apostles use it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? If so, we may be quite sure that it is a true channel of Divine grace, conveying to us spiritual help for our well-being and health of soul and body. Then we have to consider what conditions we have to fulfil in order to accept and make use of the grace which God by the sacraments puts within our reach.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE (*continued*)

WE have thought of various ladders of ascent and descent, lines of communication and traffic between God and His creation, the slow ladder of evolution, by which in response to never-interrupted divine working the creature has gradually climbed into a position not only of God-consciousness as man, but also of accepted sonship through Jesus Christ, bound to the Father by the bond, no longer of mechanical compulsion, no longer of servile subjection, but of free filial love, confidence, and willing obedience. We thought of a second ladder of assimilation, by which the raw materials of earth are incorporated into the body and the brain of a man, and become his instruments whereby he thinks, and shows to the world the teachings which he receives in colloquy with the Holy Spirit. Again we thought of the ladder of the Incarnation, whereon our Lord Jesus Christ carried human nature,

the highest product of the Holy Spirit's operation upon the dust of the earth, through all the experience of manhood, through death and resurrection and ascension to the Right Hand of the Father, and gave a complete revelation both of the Father's purpose for His children, and of the essential holiness of human nature and its capacity for being filled with God.

Further, we have realised that the Incarnation is not a ladder let down from heaven and then drawn up at the Ascension out of the reach of earth, but that the new era begun at Bethlehem continues to this day through the coming of the Holy Ghost and His continual abiding in Christ's Body the Church, into which, by Christ's command, all who will are to be incorporated out of all mankind into living membership, and in which all the members are to be maintained in wholeness of being through the continual sharing in the perfect Life of Christ, the Communion of His Body and Blood.

When we think of the Sacraments, the outward and visible channels along which flow streams of life which spring from their source hidden in the unseen life of God,

we may see that in them God has made full and complete provision for all the spiritual need of mankind. Being embodied spirits, living meantime in a world that is outward and material—and this by God's design—we require outward channels and instruments for spiritual gifts, and there is no sort of contradiction or antagonism between the spiritual and the material. Rather the material comes into its own when it is used as the spirit's vehicle. The paper and ink of an old letter have their value because they enshrine dear thoughts expressed in them by one who is dear to us. Paper and ink may convey not merely money, but what money cannot buy, love. And we know that our material bodies are equipped for the expression of spiritual relationships. And not only so, but if we imagine that friendship and love can be maintained intact in this world without bodily showings, and act on that belief, we should soon find ourselves friendless. This may be put to the proof at any time. Pass your best friend from time to time in the street, and betray your friendship by no bodily sign of recognition, no expression of friendliness; and he will at once infer that there is something



amiss in your relationship. Lovers who never sought to express their love would cease to be lovers. And love is a spiritual thing. Thus it is congruous with all the rest of our experience of God's arrangements in His outward universe that there should be provided outward vehicles and channels of communication between Christ and His members, wrought out, like all else, by the Holy Spirit, and made effective in mankind by the co-operation of the receiver with the Giver.

At the outset of life we are given the grace of Baptism. The paper, so to speak, of the cheque, consists of the water and the words. The bank is the bank of Christ's credit. He commanded that people should be baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. New birth by water and the Holy Ghost was said by Him to be essential for entrance into the heavenly relationship which God has prepared for mankind. If Christ's credit as God incarnate fails, baptism and all other sacraments lose their value at once. But to those who believe in Jesus as Lord and God, St Paul points out the sacramental value, the spiritual significance of Baptism

when he says: "By one Spirit are ye all baptized into one Body." Baptism is an act, a new creative act, of the Holy Spirit, incorporating a human spirit into a living union with Christ Jesus. Membership of Christ's Body is the supreme fact in the life of the baptized. If he co-operates with the grace of Baptism he becomes no longer conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind, as he makes proof by experience of the perfect gift of God.

Baptism is no charm, nor is any other gift of God. Its grace may be refused, opposed, rejected. But properly received and accepted, the grace of union with Christ continues to operate, enabling us to subordinate all our natural powers and instincts, all our God-given properties as human beings, to their true spiritual ends and purposes, and bring them to their truest proportion in a regenerated life in conscious union with God's will.

But Baptism is only the first of the vital gifts in the kingdom of heaven. It is supplemented by gift after gift. After the child learns to believe in God his Father, in Jesus Christ his Saviour, and in the

Holy Spirit, Who joined him to Jesus in baptism, after he has learned that God expects him to live as the child of God, after he has learned how to speak to his Father in prayer, and to listen to Him in his conscience, when he begins to feel the need of more strength and guidance if he is to live a true life, then we teach him to look forward to the next great gift, the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit, given by the Laying-on of Apostolic Hands with prayer. The outward part, the paper and ink of this cheque, is the vocal prayer for the gift, and the laying-on of the Bishop's hands. That this is a genuine cheque, and bears Christ's signature, we are satisfied by our reading of the New Testament. Our Lord emphasised again and again in His last teaching to His apostles, the promise that the Holy Spirit would come, that He would be their guide in teaching and practice, and commanded that they should go forth into all the world in His Name, and in the power of the Spirit, to minister all His gifts of eternal life to all nations. St Peter, filled on the Day of Pentecost with the Holy Spirit, preaches to the multitude that the coming of the Holy Spirit is a fulfilment



of Joel's prophecy that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. He explains that it is consequent on the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and promises to those who repent, believe, and are baptized, that they too shall receive the Holy Spirit: "For the promise is for you and your children, and for those that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And we find that the apostles, SS. John, Peter, and Paul, imparted the Holy Spirit by the laying-on of hands with prayer. We see also that St Philip, though made a deacon by the apostolic laying-on of hands, and able to do great work as an inspired evangelist, does not attempt to confirm his converts, but waits for the apostles to come to impart to them the Holy Spirit by the laying-on of hands. Also the writer to the Hebrews tells us that the laying-on of hands is one of the foundation-principles of the doctrine of Christ. Thus the Church of the first days found that Christ honoured His cheque; the Church ever since has had the same experience. The sacramental value, the spiritual thing conveyed by the outward instrument, is just that equipment of intellectual and spiritual power which



every Christian needs if he is to make full proof of his redeemed humanity, and live in true and free subordination to the Divine control; "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godlikeness, and the spirit of holy fear." These spiritual gifts complete the gift of Baptism.

But Confirmation, like Baptism, is no charm. The recipient may leave his cheque uncashed, may treat it as a useless scrap of paper, may squander the wealth conveyed to him. It is possible to inherit wealth and so abuse it as to be worse off than before. But for the development of spiritual life there is required not only exercise but food. The members of Christ's Body are maintained in health not only by their spiritual nerve-supply, the continual tonic operation of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, but also by the circulation of a spiritual blood-stream. The life that is in the Body is ministered through the appropriate vessels to all the members in the Blood. Having been incorporated into Christ, we members are to continue in spiritual life by feeding upon His Life.

“He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.” And our sharing in the Life of Christ in Holy Communion fulfils for us spiritually the purposes of the physical circulation in our natural bodies. To this we shall return in a later chapter.

We are not concerned at this moment with the graces conveyed by the sacramental channels of Holy Matrimony and Holy Order, but the mere recital of the spiritual benefits provided in Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion at once suggests that the Church would be very different from what at present it appears to be if the graces of these sacraments were more fully realised by their recipients. The members of the Church fail in their co-operation with the grace of God; the failure is in us, not in our Lord. And therefore, while we are still struggling, with only partial success, and many falls, our Lord, Who knows what is in man, has provided in His Church two sacramental means of repair, one for the healing of the sin-sick soul, absolution, and the other for the healing of the body, anointing. We trace our authority for both of these to our Lord, and to the practice of the apostles

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins. In His manhood He cast out devils by the Holy Spirit's power, by the finger of God. And in giving His Spirit to the apostles He said: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The apostles knew themselves commissioned with a ministry of reconciliation, and the ministry of God's forgiveness has been part of the stewardship of the mysteries of God which the Church has exercised ever since. In our ordinal, when the Bishop's hands are laid upon the candidate for the priesthood, the words are said: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of His sacraments, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Thus definitely is the priest commissioned to carry to all who



truly seek it, the comfort and strengthening grace of God's forgiveness. The sinner confesses his sins, the priest absolves, but the forgiveness ministered is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

So with the healing of the body; our Lord, Who spent much time in healing the sick, definitely commanded His disciples to do the same, in His name and power; "Freely ye have received, freely give." The apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, conveyed God's gift of healing to the sick, by such means as the laying-on of hands, anointing with oil, and other ways also; and soon the regular practice of the Church followed St James' indication: "Is any among you sick? Let him send for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." Here the sacramental healing of body and soul are conjoined. The testimony of the first seven centuries of our era shows that anointing was used for the spiritual healing of the sick; it was not till later that it



became gradually dropped and replaced by extreme unction of the dying, just as among the faithless to-day, prayer for the sick tends to be postponed till all other means have been tried in vain.

In all the sacraments the purpose is to bring the recipient into immediate contact with our Lord for the receiving of life more abundant. And the right reception of the sacraments demands a right approach, and a true preparation of the heart in coming to meet the Saviour. The preparation is the preparation of repentance, faith, and love. These three are not successive steps in time. Though repentance is usually mentioned first there can be no real repentance without belief in God's love, and repentance is not complete unless it manifests love not only to God, but forgiving love to one's neighbours. The three develop together in the soul. As repentance deepens faith becomes clearer, and love shines more brightly. And love as it grows, enlarges faith, and makes penitence still deeper.

*Note.*—There is a not uncommon disposition to-day, shared by many thoughtful physicians, to regard the sacraments from the psychological point

of view as valuable means of suggestion. We may quite well agree with this view, provided we understand what we mean by suggestion, and realise that the minister of the sacrament is only the medium and not the source of the suggestion. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 St John i. 3). It is necessary to insist that life for the Christian is essentially union with the supernatural. The suggestion in the sacraments is God's, not man's merely. Their proper reception depends on faith in God. And all who trust God will be sure that His suggestions are true, *i.e.* that He does actually convey the spiritual gifts which He promises to give through the sacraments.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CULTIVATION OF FAITH

IN the last chapter we began to think of the way of spiritual approach to our Lord. A right spiritual approach is essential if the grace of the sacraments is to be effective in us, for we have seen that grace does not work mechanically, but requires a co-operation on our part with God.

We saw that the three steps of repentance, faith, and charity are not entirely successive steps in a chronological order, for some degree of faith is essential to the birth of penitence, while charity is a necessity for its development. And faith grows clearer by the operation of penitence and love. Each of the three requires the other two. But lest any should think that this makes the approach to God in the sacraments very hard, inasmuch as faith, penitence, and love are difficult to acquire, let us be quite clear at once that these are

not simply human accomplishments, but free gifts of God to be had for the asking. Being marks of God's contact with man, and fruits of the Spirit's indwelling, we may be quite certain that they are gifts which God intends us to have, and therefore we may pray for them with the certain assurance that if we really desire them they will be granted us freely.

Let us in this chapter take the power to believe, and consider Faith and its cultivation. The raw material of faith is of universal distribution; every living creature has to begin by trusting its environment. The young of wild animals will even trust that dangerous beast of prey called man, until instructed by their parents, who have learned by experience, that the human being is a dangerous and untrustworthy companion. Those who have read Benjamin Kidd's "Science of Power" will remember his experiment with the wild ducklings who played with him on the friendliest terms until their shocked and frightened mother taught them not to trust strangers. The child must trust his parents or die, and if they prove trustworthy they develop in him the habit of trust, not only in them, but in the



God to Whom he sees them pray. A little child has no difficulty in learning that God unseen is ever near. The unseen is quite as obvious to the child as the seen. And so he can learn very truly to pray, and grow in spirit by converse with God. He learns to form a conception of God as his ever-present though unseen Father. He begins to learn what God expects of His child in the way of obedience. He believes when taught that God loves him and grieves when His child is naughty. Thus even already faith, sorrow for sin, and love become associated in his mind. And this becomes illuminated as he learns of the Incarnation, which naturally serves as a corrective to false ideas of God which he sometimes receives from adults. As an example of this let me cite a conversation that took place in a Sunday kindergarten. One child, aged six, had heard a damnable heresy, and repeated it to this effect: "If you are naughty, God does not love you any more." "The wonderful thing," said the teacher, "is that God does not stop loving you, even when you are naughty. He does love you still, but He is very very sorry." "Oh,"

said the six-year-old, "that is like Christ crucified." We sophisticated grown-up people often think that sacramental doctrine is too difficult for the child to understand, forgetting, because *we* do not understand, that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and that the kingdom of heaven is open to the child-spirit. Two other kindergarten instances within my knowledge will illustrate this. The little ones had been taught about baptism, they had drawn a baptism in coloured chalks on brown paper, and they had been taken to Church to see the actual sacrament of baptism administered. Afterwards the teacher questioned them, and asked what happened when the priest blesses the water. Straight from a six-year-old came the reply, "The Holy Ghost gets in." I should be glad to meet any doctor of divinity who could put the essential truth more completely in five words. The other example is of a child of five years, attending for the first time a children's Eucharist. Being a sophisticated adult, I had been prejudiced against children's Eucharists, never having seen one, but after the whole Sunday School, including the infants, had been receiving

instruction on Holy Communion, I arranged a service one Saturday morning. Some of the parents came and communicated, while the children sang the hymns and followed the service. A little boy of five was kneeling next his teacher, and when it came to the Prayer of Consecration he turned to her with a smile of understanding. After the service she asked: "Weren't you tired, Billy, kneeling all that time?" "Oh, no," he answered, with sparkling eyes, "you see we knew what it was." And yet you will meet people quite frequently who will tell you that children of ten do not understand enough to be confirmed. Such a remark only proves that they do not know what a child is, what confirmation is, and what they have missed by not having been taught in a Sunday kindergarten. They were probably confirmed when they were fourteen or fifteen, when they were too old, having lost the simple understanding of their childhood's faith, and too young, as they had not yet attained to the assurance of the adult.

Between childhood and adult life comes the stormy period of adolescence. It is a time of revolution, the whole nature is



changing. One might almost say that the difference between a boy of sixteen and a boy of ten is a difference not of degree, but of kind. The adolescent is not the least like his little brother, and he is quite different from his father, and he does not know himself what he is like. He stands in need of careful piloting. If he has been confirmed at the age say of ten or twelve, at an age when he can still believe what he is told, and has given himself simply and whole-heartedly to God the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen him, and if he has been acquiring the spiritual habit of regular communion, believing that our Lord comes to take up His abode in him and feed him continually with His perfect Life, then he has the best of all chances of weathering the stormy period successfully, carrying an accumulating cargo of rich spiritual experience, to traffic in the greater world-market of manhood. And he will need this wealth of spiritual experience, or run great risk of bankruptcy. For he is assailed on all sides with temptations to put his trust not in the spirit but in the intellect or the flesh. The illusion of self-determination floats like a mirage in the world's glare before his



eyes, and he is apt to waste his spiritual substance in its pursuit. He may fall into the common but deadly mistake of compromise, and while he attempts to worship God on Sunday, bow in the temple of Mammon or of some other false diety through the week. He may take pride in his intellectual freedom and summon the whole universe, God included, to judgment before the throne of his reason, only to find, by the inexorable logic of his reason, that unless he takes something for granted that he cannot prove the whole universe evaporates on analysis to nothing, and he is left in utter loneliness, only saved from non-existence by the fact that he cannot help taking his own existence as an actual fact. The outward world is a world of evanescent appearance, and he must either annihilate it in despair, or consent to believe that there is an inner meaning behind the outward show of things. Or he may think that freedom consists in the unfettered expression of his animal nature, only to find that the flesh, unless ruled by the spirit, is a burden and a bondage too heavy to bear. If he is not to make shipwreck of his life he must

come to some belief in the Divine Spirit; he must remember when he comes to himself that he has a Father, and drag, with whatever struggle, his weary steps homeward, for elsewhere there is no rest.

Most of us, by one path or another, arrive at a stage when we do believe in God, but are conscious that our faith is weaker than it should be. We have gained a wise distrust in our own infallibility, we see the hollowness of the world's attractions, and we refuse to be the slaves of our bodies. Yet pride, self-indulgence, and anxiety about money or appearance have a larger voice in our inner counsels than we approve. They should be silent, in fact, before the voice of God, if we really trusted Him as we ought. So we are dissatisfied and uncomfortable. But this is a healthy and hopeful dissatisfaction which will impel us to seek a solution along the only possible way of hope, viz. to trust God more. We are led to the disciples' prayer: "Lord, increase our faith." Our Lord's answer to that prayer is suggestive. He did not turn, lay His hands on them and say: "Receive the gift of faith." He told them that if they cultivated the tiny

seed-like gift of faith which they had, it would greatly grow. Under His tuition, these apostles, who were to astonish and win the world by their faithfulness, were set to simple tasks of healing the sick. The disciple must not leave his little faith, tied in a napkin, to lie in idleness because it is small. He must use it, for by use it will grow.

But how are we to cultivate and exercise our faith? We are apt to be afraid of using it, lest it prove too weak and we fail. That is to say, fear paralyses faith. Then we hear our Lord say: "Fear not, only believe." He takes us by the hand, and when we look at Him, we forget our fear. So first we must develop our confidence in His promise: "I am with you always." For it was the experience of knowing Christ's presence still with them after His resurrection that changed the disciples' weakness into strength.

At this point the psychologist comes to our assistance, for by simple experiments he shows us not only that faith can initiate movements within the physical body, but also how faith may be made active by



auto-suggestion. Such a simple thing as Chevreul's pendulum<sup>1</sup> will exemplify this fact. The pendulum swings in whatever direction the holder expects. If he expects no movement, the pendulum remains still. If he expects a side-to-side swing, that swing follows. If he expects a change of direction, the expected change takes place. And this has nothing to do with the will once the holder has consented by his will to try the experiment. It is simply the result of imagination. Imagination is a word with a bad reputation, but it is important to remember that there is a true use of imagination, which if cultivated will guard us against false images. Imagination is simply the power to make mental pictures. In the case of the pendulum, while I make no conscious movement, I make a mental picture of some definite

<sup>1</sup> This consists of a coin or ring suspended by a thread about nine inches long from the end of a stick of similar length. Hold this over a sheet of paper on which a circle has been drawn, with two diameters intersecting at right angles, so that the coin comes between the eye and the centre of the circle. If one eye is closed a sharper definition is obtained. Holding the hand still, imagine this coin swinging along one of the diameters, or round the circumference, and it will do so.



movement of the pendulum, and at once, without my knowing anything about it, the whole nervous and muscular mechanism necessary to carry that movement into effect is set to work. Unconscious muscular activity, appropriate to a given end, is set in motion as the result of a thought. Now when we realise that every organ and every blood-vessel in the body is regulated by the action of muscle-fibres and nerves we begin to see how thought can operate on the body. We all know how a thought of shame or self-consciousness may dilate the tiny blood-vessels in the skin of the face, how sudden fear may contract them, and at the same time alter the beating of the heart, and paralyse the muscles of the limbs so that the terrified person may stand rooted to the ground; or again, how the thought of food may cause active secretion of the digestive juices of a hungry man, and so forth. Thought, especially when associated with some emotion, alters the working of the body. And again, to make the thought physically effective, one merely has to repeat it quietly and without effort to oneself. It fills the subconscious mind and

thereafter works out its results. This is the rationale of the remarkable cures, not merely of functional, but also of organic disease, wrought by the New School of Applied Psychology at Nancy.

But though the systematic and scientific use of auto-suggestion for the cure of bodily ailments is a new thing, the same principle has always been used in the Church, which is always bringing out of its treasures things new and old, for the development, not merely of a healthy body and a happy mind, but of that true relation to God wherein the real health of a person consists.

The old, old practice of meditation, what is it but the occupation of the mind with some truth of God's revealing as we wait on the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts? Meditation has been made, I think, unnecessarily difficult by elaborate descriptions and dissections into its component parts. But really it is just this, the habit of listening while God tells you something. Take, for example, one of the promises of Jesus Christ: "I am with you always." Dwell on it, repeat it quietly to yourself. Its meaning becomes fuller and fuller, and its implications become clearer. Fear and

anxiety must disappear, because Christ and I together must be sufficient to meet any situation. As anxiety goes, peace enters, and true prayer becomes possible. The difficulties in the way of obedience melt, and the next duty becomes plain. Temptations lose their attraction when He is realised as present, and it becomes easier to walk in the Spirit. Out of meditation we learn to keep Christ in the centre of every situation, and in the innermost shrine of our heart. Holy Communion becomes a reality. He comes to us as He promised, and is still in us as we go away. If our Communion is followed by a meditation at home upon the fact of Christ in us, faith is bound to develop, and power of accomplishment will increase.

Our Lord lays great stress on the necessity of faith for the healing of the body. His question, asked or implied, was always: "Dost thou believe that I am able to do this thing?" and His answer to the prayer for healing was: "According as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." When we pray for health we are to believe that the divine process of healing is actually at work within us, that the blood-forming



organs are doing their work and producing those elements which the blood requires for combating the disease and repairing the damaged tissues, that the glands are producing those mysterious secretions by which the balance of health is adjusted and maintained, that the blood-stream is carrying to every part the nourishment and vitality which it requires, and that the whole process is being regulated by the central nervous system, which gains its inspiration from the mind at rest and confident in God. As by faith one opens one's soul to the incoming of the Spirit of God, the peace of God takes possession of the whole organism, and the characteristics of the Holy Spirit's working become apparent, quietness, order, and increasing vitality. Thus to meditate on the Holy Spirit within us, quietly working to restore harmony and build up life, is a most practical and valuable exercise of faith.

As faith grows, worry must disappear. We are frequently told that worry, far more than hard work, is the cause of breakdown. Worry is practically a vote of want of confidence in God, and there-



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fore cannot continue to exist in the same mind with faith. Faith brings peace of mind in its train, with power to rest, and the quiet, confident waiting upon the Lord which brings renewal of strength.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PENITENCE

KEEPING in mind that the three things necessary for a real approach to God, penitence, faith, and love, do not represent simply human efforts, but are themselves divine gifts to be had for the asking, which grow as we acquire the habit of dependence upon God, we thought first of the cultivation of faith. And we saw how teachers of the new psychology, approaching the problems of human life from the scientific point of view, and demonstrating the practical value of reflective auto-suggestion, are testifying to the importance of the Christian practice of meditation and contemplation. Faith is built up in the times of quiet waiting upon God, and as confidence grows, the internal strain and tension, the fightings and fears within, give place to a peace of mind, which tends to health of body and enables the believer greatly to increase the output of effective service.

Now let us turn to the subject of

penitence. Like the raw material out of which faith is made, the beginnings of a capacity for penitence are of universal distribution among mankind. Even the dog, which has associated on intimate terms with his master, learns to know his master's will and even without punishment shows signs of sorrow when he deserves to be out of favour. The association with a higher being, and a knowledge that that higher being trusts him and expects something of him, develop in the dog something that looks akin to conscience. And when you talk to the human child about conscience, the voice which seems to speak inside him and tells him what he ought and ought not to do, the child always nods an understanding head. God-consciousness implies the sense of responsibility which is essential to penitence. The revelation of God which Jesus Christ has given us by His Incarnation, as it clears our vision both as to the nature and character of Godhead, and the nature and character of manhood, while it immeasurably enlarges our ability to trust and to love, also correspondingly increases our capacity for peni-

tence. For Bethlehem and Calvary, the Empty Tomb and the Ascension, and the promise, fulfilled first at Pentecost, and subsequently at every Confirmation, have put a new order of existence, a new relationship to the Most High, and a new hope of life, eternal and incorruptible, within our reach.

Bethlehem teaches us, as nothing else in history can, that human nature is essentially pure and altogether good, inasmuch as it is capable of being occupied by the all-holy God; and further, that it has been in fact taken into inseparable union with Him. The incarnate life of Jesus shows us, on the plane of history, on the ordinary level of man's daily transactions, what humanity can accomplish when it is held in willing subjection to the Will of God, and is upheld by an unbroken habit of reliance upon the Holy Spirit. Christ's works were wrought by Him in His capacity as the Son of Man conscious that the Spirit of God was in Him, as man walking on earth in the Kingdom of Heaven. After a truly human life, perfect to its smallest detail by the fact of the Divine possession, Jesus Christ on



Calvary showed to what extreme the love of God goes. That a man will die for his friends is the final proof of his love; but that Jesus was willing not only to sacrifice His life, but to bear shame and derision, agony of mind and slow torture of body, to be hounded to crucifixion as one who had blasphemed his Father's honour, and apparently to leave the victory in His enemies' hands; all that deliberate willingness to bear the worst dishonour that could be heaped upon Him, although He had the power to overawe and convince and terrify them by coming down from the Cross at will, and destroy them with an avenging army of angels—how could the patient, long-suffering of divine love further demonstrate itself? The fact that Jesus died for His enemies, knowing that the perfection of His love would have power to convert them into friends, and draw rebellious mankind into the willing surrender of penitence, reveals the Cross as the symbol of conquering love, and the beacon of hope. For we, who still love our own way too much, and God's way too little, may learn from the Cross

that Christ's power will wean us entirely from the love of lower things, and enable us to render the willing obedience of God's children. Further, in addition to the forbearance of God's love, and its converting power, our Lord on the Cross shows by contrast the hideousness of selfishness and sin, for God is not a mere Absolute, but a Father; and the Cross gives a human measurement of the grief that God feels for man's sin, and of His yearning for man's restoration. We cannot fathom the depths of the Divine nature, nor understand how God can suffer. But Jesus Christ, both in His teaching (cp. the parable of the Prodigal Son) and on the Cross, proves that God does care, even for His least child; and caring, patiently contrives a way by which His self-banished child may be restored to Him.

In His Resurrection-Body Christ revealed the truth that human nature completely united to God cannot be overcome by death, but rises to heights where what we call the laws of nature cease to apply. And in His Ascension He showed the destiny which God has

prepared for mankind, to lift man up into the glory of the realised presence of the Father, and into that perfect fellowship of the sons of God, where love is supreme and evil has no place. Into that state we have no means of penetrating by human thought, except the visions of a St John or a St Paul, who see things that may not be uttered, and which human language can hardly begin to suggest.

Our Lord, then, in His incarnate Life, wherein He has traversed the whole path of evolution from the dust of the earth to the Right Hand of the Father, shows us God's care for man, God's destiny for man, God's grief when man turns aside from the way of life, God's plan for man's restoration to eternal life, and finally, the power by which that plan is to be carried into effect. For our Lord's last provision was the legacy of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit by whose operation He had become incarnate, by whose power He had done all things and endured all things, by whose power He had raised His human nature from the tomb. The Holy Spirit was to come and carry to every individual among



mankind, the gifts of eternal life that Christ had brought into humanity as a whole by His Incarnation: "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." The Holy Spirit came upon the Church at Pentecost, and ever since, abiding in the Church for ever, and so making it Christ's Body, the residence of His Spirit, He has called the children of men, one by one, into the membership of that Body in Baptism; one by one He has equipped them with powers for functioning in Christ's Body through the Laying-on of Hands; one by one He builds up the members through the various channels by which His gifts are ministered; to each one He speaks in his inner conscience, and all true prayer is His operation in the soul.

Thus through the Incarnation, and the living work of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Body the Church, from Pentecost till now, there is put within our reach everything that we need for union with Jesus Christ, for deliverance from all evil, for growth in Christ into perfect sonship, and for enjoyment of our eternal inheritance, the glorious liberty of the communion of saints in the light of the presence of God.



In this revelation we are given motives for penitence which the pagan misses. For to the Christian human destiny is more glorious than for anyone else. Nothing short of perfect fellowship with God is our destiny, and we know that the practical working out of that destiny is in the hands of the Holy Spirit, quietly but all-powerfully working in the souls of men. Therefore when we seek to deepen that penitence, which is essential to our enjoyment of communion with God, our first act is to invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit, and commit ourselves entirely to His direction.

As He guides us to ponder over our relation to the Father, in the light which shines through the Incarnation, He shows us our life against the background of God's love and intention for us. He shows us how different we should have been had we allowed God to have His way with us, and we see that our failures are not merely our own loss, but they are loss to the whole of Christ's Body, for all the members are affected by each one, and that they are loss in the sight of God. In proportion as we realise that our selfish indulgences and sins in thought, word, and act, and

omission, wound Him Who loves us, and that they impair our power to respond to His love, so far there grows in us the gift of true contrition. So we pray the Holy Spirit to teach us contrition by deepening our sense of God's wounded love. Our hearts must respond by true sorrow for sin as we realise that God is not a task master, nor a detective, nor even only a judge, but above all a Father concerned in all that happens to us.

But what have we to be sorry for? The selfish heart tends to suppress the memory of its misdeeds, they become slurred over by habit, and are not easy always to recall. Here again we need the help of the Holy Spirit. If we genuinely want to be rid of our sins and self-love, and ask Him to probe our wounds to their depth, He will enable us to recall the significant facts of the past days, and bring into light those things of which we ought to be ashamed. Self-examination is a tedious process from which the slothful soul shrinks. Yet it is essential to penitence, and we must go through with it, using for our standard some such expression of God's law as the Ten Commandments read spiritually, or

1 Cor. xiii., or the catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh given in the Epistle to the Galatians, or the duty to God and our neighbour in the Catechism.

It is wise to write down on paper, for the sake of definiteness, the sins and failures of which we accuse ourselves, as the Holy Spirit convicts our conscience on one point after another. Especially useful is it to distinguish the earliest sin we can remember, for though it may be in itself small, its effects are not small if it has remained in memory all this time, and it may provide the key to a sinful tendency. Also there may stand out one particular word or deed of which we are particularly ashamed, our worst sin. How came we to be so far from our true selves that we permitted that to happen? And then there will show itself the sin to which we are most often tempted, and which has been the cause of our most frequent failures, our besetting sin. And if we set before us a positive standard of duty, we shall not fail to note the sins of omission, which may be the gravest of all.

Self-examination enables us to see our-



selves more truly, and gives us the material for our contrition. We know now that in this respect and in that we have failed God our Father, and grieved His love, and deserve punishment. We see that the outward sufferings of our lives are not God's design, but are the inevitable result of our own sins, or the sins of others. Misery is not God's intention, but results from man's insistence on his own way. This makes sin still more hateful. But the Holy Spirit, in deepening contrition, takes vengeance as God alone can, not felling us with condemnation, but arousing us to a shame for the purpose of deliverance. God's vengeance is remedial, not destructive. For contrition never drives us away from God to destruction, but draws us out of the far country, to come home and make a clean breast to the Father.

The next step, confession, making a clean breast to God, is hateful to the sinner until he is contrite. But when he is really sorry for sin, nothing will satisfy him until he has confessed. Honour compels him to apologise, and admit his fault. The Holy Spirit will stir in him the spirit of sonship, and make the honour of that sonship tell.



Courage will overcome cowardice, and the sinner makes his confession.

It is one of the tragedies of history that, owing to corruptions in the Church of old days, thousands of souls have been deprived of that access to realised forgiveness which our Lord committed to His Church to minister. It is strange that many who recognise the priest as the steward of God's mysteries, in the ministry of Baptism and of Holy Communion, who receive his ministry of God's word in preaching, and his ministry of God's blessing in Holy Matrimony, yet cannot see that the Absolution pronounced by God's appointed minister is a conveyance of God's pardon. Yet this gift of God's pardon is vital to the peace of the soul. Jesus died that God's forgiveness might be brought to man, and together with the gift of the Holy Spirit, our Lord gave this definite commission to His Ministry: "Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Without the assurance of God's pardon man's soul languishes; and knowing that, our Saviour commanded His Church to carry that forgiveness, in the

power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, when the apostolic hands are laid upon the head of every candidate for priesthood, the words are solemnly said: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Laying-on of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of His sacraments, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The responsibility of such a ministry is great, and no priest may throw such a gift broadcast. He has to act, as Christ's minister, by the power of the Spirit, and judge in the spirit of Christ, whether the sinner is truly repentant. In hearing his confession the priest has the materials for his judgment set before him and is enabled to see what the penitent's attitude is. He can judge if the sorrow is genuine, he can throw light on the situation that enables the penitent to see things more clearly. He can give counsel where it is needed, but above all, when satisfied of the genuineness of the repentance, he can give in the

Spirit of God, as Christ's appointed messenger, the sure message of God's free and complete pardon that sets the sinner free from all doubt, despondency, and fear. The penitent can go forth, knowing most surely that, while he has done his best to repent, God has accepted his contrition and confession, and has set him free both from the guilt and from the power of all his past sin. Inasmuch as he could never make up for the past, Christ has made up for him. God accepts him, not for what he has been, but for what he may become now that by penitence he has come home again. And the possibility is opened to him of living again in the grace of God. In his confession the penitent promises amendment and satisfaction. He promises, *i.e.*, to make up as far as in him lies for any wrong he has done, and he takes the great promise of amendment on his lips, realising his inability to keep it in his own strength. Only by the grace of the Holy Spirit can he keep it, but that grace is given him in absolution, and he goes out certain that Divine power is given to him to live faithful to Christ. This point needs continual emphasising. We are far too much



held in fear of sin, because we fail to dwell on our source of strength. "Walk in the Spirit," says St Paul, and the Holy Spirit will enable us so to do if we only trust Him fully. When we accuse ourselves in confession we must not accuse God of not helping us. "I had the omnipotence of grace to conquer if I chose." In leaving the Confessional and the Altar-rail, and in rising from our knees after prayer, we should know that we have the omnipotence of grace to conquer all our difficulties and temptations. If we believe in God's faithfulness we shall be rid of fear. God means to free us altogether from sin, and give us power to live as citizens of heaven. But we fail as often as we forget. Therefore we have to renew our penitence, and confess again, and be restored afresh. But with each effort our self-love and self-sufficiency are more deeply wounded to the death, and the love of God and the appreciation of His sufficiency grow more strong, till self is dead and God is all. Then we have fully entered into our heritage.

As a means of restoration to health penitence is of the utmost value. The confession of sins is like the opening of



an abscess. The evil things which were before festering unseen, and causing a fever in the soul, are let out and removed. The wound is dressed and healing begins. The psycho-analysts are telling how much damage results in the nervous system from buried "complexes" and forgotten tendencies of the mind which have been suppressed but which, without our knowing it, are always seeking a way to express themselves. The subconscious mental conflict which results uses up energy and causes neurasthenia. But when these "complexes" are brought to light and resolved, the conflict ends and the mental energy is set free for its proper work. Although conscious penitence and confession cannot reach so far back as psycho-analysis, yet the penitent is to be assured, when he has made the best confession he can, that the absolution extends to sins forgotten as well as those remembered, and that he is restored to perfect spiritual health. The assurance of divine pardon is an unspeakable relief, and after leaving the confessional the penitent will do well to sit in thankfulness and meditate quietly on the work of the Holy Spirit within him, cleansing him from every trace and remnant

of sinful desire, and leaving him spotless and pure. The relief from the burden of sin is of unspeakable value both for peace of mind and for the healing of the body, for it sets the recuperative power free to work unburdened.

As an illustration of the effect of absolution on health, I may cite the experience of a young priest, who found in a hospital ward a man who had lost his arm in a saw-mill. After a time the man's condition grew worse, and the nurse told the priest that they had little hope for him and were sending for his relatives. The priest spoke to the man and said: "I notice you have been looking rather sad. Is it your illness, or is there something on your mind?" "There's something on my mind, sir," said the patient, and proceeded to tell his trouble. The priest said: "This is a matter in which I can help you, not merely as a friend, but as a minister of Christ." Then he instructed him how to prepare his confession, and promised to return that night and hear it. That evening the nurse put screens round his bed, the patient made his confession and received absolution, and from that moment he began to recover.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHARITY

WE have already seen that Faith, Penitence, and Charity are not simply human accomplishments, but divine gifts to the hungry soul. Nor are they gifts which accomplish their purpose simply by divine operation ; they require man's consent and co-operation, man's appetite in seeking, and man's cultivation of the gift when received. Like all the gifts of the Kingdom of Heaven they are given as a seed. No possible effort of the soil can make the seed, though it may have all the raw materials out of which the seed is made. The soil can only prepare to receive the seed, and once it is received the living soil and the living seed work together to produce the fruit.

It is true of Charity, as of Faith and Penitence, that its raw materials are universally present in the soil of our human nature. Further, even in the animal kingdom we may trace its rudiments, for

example in the instinct of the mother to sacrifice her life for her young, in the dog which will lie down and die beside its master's grave, or in the case of the battery-mule which, on its companion's death during the war, refused to eat or drink for three days till at last it had to be shot. The natural world is more noble than we are apt to believe; we have tended to decry the animal kingdom in contrast with humanity, but we have been taught now to see that all the elements of humanity are present implicitly in the lower creation out of which human nature has emerged. Nor is this to be regarded as demeaning to humanity, for all creatures are the work of God. But when, by the working of the Holy Spirit, the creation at last emerged on to the plane of humanity, there was prepared a creature conscious of God, capable of answering His love as a child responds to his father and mother, in freedom. The tragedy came when man abused his freedom by choosing evil rather than good; and the history of mankind has been the history of the prodigal son, abusing his Father's gifts, spurning his Father's love and fellowship, working out



his own misery by continually preferring his own way, till at last he comes to himself, remembers his true home, and makes bold to throw himself on his Father's compassion. The patience of the Father's love has drawn him out of death into life again.

In ourselves we feel that we have something of the family-likeness of God, the generous impulse, the preference of friendship to enmity, the dislike of selfishness and cruelty, the contempt of pride as a false thing, and the respect for simplicity and honour. Yet as we think of love as Christ Jesus has shown it, and as St Paul has described it, we realise that the measure of love in us is pitiably small, and that its quality is adulterated by much self-love and self-pleasing. If in approaching the sacraments it were necessary to be in full and complete charity with God and our neighbours, we might well fear to draw nigh. So we must distinguish between charity in its full perfection, as shown in the character of Jesus, approximations to which we can trace in the saints, and charity in its less developed form such as we must have if we would make a good

communion. If we had perfect charity we would have no sin, for love destroys sin, and perfect faith, for charity requires faith for its perfection. But we do not approach the altar as men made perfect, but as sinners desiring perfection. Christ meets us with His blessing bestowed, not upon the righteous, but upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Perfect righteousness and perfect love are His, alone of all men. For a share in that perfection we hunger and thirst, and in proportion to our appetite we receive the blessing, "ye shall be filled."

The kind of charity, then, that we require for communion with Christ may be described, negatively, as the repudiation of all that contradicts love, all the self-seeking, self-conceit, self-indulgence, pride, enmity, jealousy, hate, vindictiveness, which tend to warp the direction of our life, and turn its energies into false channels. This negative way, the removal and disowning of all that contradicts and opposes love, belongs to penitence, with which we have already dealt. And on the positive side, enabling us to repudiate its opposite, we have the consciousness that we are in very

truth God's children, that there is in our character something fundamentally akin to Him, that however overlaid with dross, however distorted by misuse, however feeble for want of healthy exercise, there belongs to our nature essentially something that is akin to all that is good, and beautiful, and true, a common ground of being on which the divine and human can meet. We know from our religion that God has made us so, with a humanity capable of meeting the divine; we know that the divine and the human have in fact met perfectly in the person of Jesus Christ, thereby bridging the gap which man's disobedience had made; we know that in Baptism the Holy Spirit has given to us personally such a way of living contact with Christ that His perfection can bring our nature to the fulness for which God intends it.

The more we meditate on the Incarnation, and the more we ponder on our Lord's teaching, the more do we come to feel the attractive power of His great love, and the more are we compelled to realise that He intends us to be like Him. We tend to paralyse ourselves with the fear that



it is impossible for us to be like Him, or we wear ourselves to death in desperate attempts to make ourselves like Him by the persistent efforts of our own wills. But our Lord teaches us not to be afraid of any impossibilities when the Spirit of God is at work, and on the other hand not to expect to accomplish anything apart from His Spirit. He points the way of faith as the way to perfection. We are to believe His Word; believe that the Holy Spirit is given; believe that Christ shares His own life with us through the Communion of His Body and Blood; believe that our sins are forgiven by God, and that forgiveness is ministered through absolution; believe that healing is imparted through anointing and the Laying-on of Hands. Above all we are to believe that by the habit of communion, by the continual abiding in Him and letting Him abide in us, that character which is His, the character of love in all its strength and beauty, will steadily grow and develop until it comes to its fulness. If we believe that—and how can we call ourselves believers if we do not?—then out of our faith there grows a greater and greater hunger and thirst



after Christlikeness, which will result both in more frequent communion and more habitual thinking upon Christ. We learn to walk with Him, and work with Him; and further, our eyes are opened to see Him in our neighbours. In them there is the same fundamental ground on which God and man may meet. In them as in us there is a corresponding need of penitence; we are fellow-sufferers through sin; for them as for us Christ died; to them as to us Christ offers His transforming life; them and us alike it is His will to lift up into a new life, through the communion of His life in His Church. For them as for us there is the same patient loving power of the Spirit at work. And the most glorious task to which we can be set is to help our neighbours to become conscious of the possibilities of sharing Christ's life, and to hunger and thirst after Him.

This brings us to the proof of love, viz. willing service. There is no joy greater than to serve those we love. Therefore Christ took upon Him the form of the lover when He took the form of the servant. There is no end to service, as there is no end to love. It is only when we think of

ourselves that we tire of service. Love makes service perfect freedom. It is this fact that makes the religion of saving one's own soul such a pitiable missing of the mark. Our souls are bound up with the souls of the profiteers and the prostitutes, the Orangemen and Sinn Feiners, the Kaffirs, the Chinese, the Turks, the Bolshevists. They are all dear to Christ, their sins like ours grieve His Spirit; for them as for us He died, and they all come within the range of His prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The Christian world has failed just so far as the love of Christians has waxed cold. Had we and the generations of Christians before us shown forth the light of Christ in the same way that the Christians of the first three centuries did, the world would not have come into its present state. Will it require another outbreak of world-wide persecution to bring us through purgation and penitence to a new and living sense of Christ's love and Christ's claims? Or can we see a more hopeful outlook, supplied by the Washington Conference, the League of Nations, and the Lambeth Encyclical, which will send us on to our knees in St

Andrewstide to pray with more confidence that the love of God through Jesus Christ may draw all nations to Him, may at last bring peace on earth, and goodwill among men? Intercession is for the Christian one of the obvious duties of love. Our Christian pleadings are unified by the Holy Spirit with the eternal pleading of Christ, Who ever liveth to make intercession. Thus our intercessions find their centre and heart in the Eucharist, when with hearts lifted up into heavenly places we join with the whole Church Universal, in Christ, before the Father's throne, pleading God's love and Man's love shown on Calvary to draw mankind to God.

The spiritual content of our religion demands our constant attention. Behind the outer form there is the spiritual reality; and it is both practical and necessary to "walk in the Spirit." When we come to Christ trusting, but hungering to trust more vitally, penitent, but desiring to hate sin to the death, and loving a little, but desiring from the bottom of our sincere hearts to be filled with Christ's own perfect love, then in the practice of communion we find as a matter of spiritual fact, that in answer



to our expectation we are lifted up into heavenly places, and that we do develop a dislike of sins which we once loved, and a capacity to view other people with charity, patience, and a growing spirit of fellowship. We realise that Christ in love has come down to our level and is lifting us up to His; and we find that without losing touch with Him we can stoop to the level of the poorest and most forlorn and most perverse, and let Christ in us lift them up also.

Christ's love will teach us to be ashamed of the narrow range of our kindness, and the practice of dwelling in spirit in the presence of His love will enlarge our view of our neighbours. As we commit our ways to God, the Holy Spirit through our communions and prayers and meditations works His miracles in our souls, makes us prefer discipline to indulgence, and changes out of all recognition our weak and often adulterated charity—adulterated with vanity and pride—until it approximates more and more to the true standard which Christ reveals to us. Long-suffering, forbearance, meekness, humility, patience, the patient, reiterated refusal to be em-



bittered by disappointment—these qualities of love which the unconverted world cannot understand, because it cannot see their strength—all these qualities become the property of him who in hunger and thirst comes continually to Christ to be filled. More and more the Spirit moulds his willing heart after the likeness of Christ; more and more the form of the servant becomes apparent in him; more and more the joy of service enables him to endure all things; more and more Christ's likeness becomes his likeness; and Christ's robe of charity, first cast upon him to cover the nakedness of his sins, has become not only his robe, but his habit, the supernatural use and custom of his soul.

As true charity grows in the character, bodily results follow. The man whose energies are occupied in serving his neighbours has no time for weak selfishness. The doctor who labours night and day during an epidemic has no time to get ill. And the life of service toughens the nervous and emotional constitution. Thus endurance is a characteristic of charity. He who serves develops the capacity for service, and grows stronger to carry other

people's burdens. In doing so he forgets his own and they cease to weigh upon him. Thus charity like the other virtues tends to health of body and mind as well as of spirit.

## CHAPTER X

### HOLY COMMUNION

WE have thought of the Sacramental Principle, and of the steps by which we approach God in the Sacraments. Now let us think of Holy Communion as the Sacrament of ordinary life. Unlike Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, and Holy Matrimony, it is not the initiation into a new state of life, or the entering upon a new vocation with the seal of God's blessing, nor, like the Sacrament of Penance or of Unction, is it the occasional remedy for grave spiritual or bodily ill-health. Both from our Lord's words and the action of the Apostles, guided by the Spirit, we can see that this great sacrament was appointed not for rare and occasional, but for frequent and ordinary use, not so much as a medicine for grievous sickness, but rather as the food for the maintenance of spiritual health. Our Lord speaks of His Flesh and Blood as our food, and while instituting the Blessed Sacra-

ment He described the relationship between Himself and His disciples as the union of the Vine and the branches, a continual abiding in one another, uninterruptedly sharing a common life, He in them and they in Him. Severed from communion with Him, His disciples become fruitless and wither. Once for all incorporated into His Body, the members are to continue to grow in health and strength by continual supplies of the life which is in the body, the Life of Christ in His Body the Church.

For the maintenance of physical and mental health we know the necessity of food, exercise, and rest. And for the health of the spirit which is essential to the full enjoyment of the inheritance of body and mind, the same three factors are essential. The Eucharist gives supremely the opportunity for all three.

To appreciate how we feed upon Christ in Holy Communion I have found it helpful to fall back on St Paul's great analogy of the Body and its members, similar to our Lord's metaphor of the Vine. Our Lord, Who in His incarnate life clothed His Humanity in a physical body, and conquered while wearing it all man's enemies,



after He had raised that Humanity into the highest glory in heaven, devised for it a new Body, made by His Spirit's work, incorporating into union with Himself all men who were willing to surrender themselves to Him. Christ's Humanity is thus embodied in His Church, filled with His Spirit, and commissioned to carry His Spirit and His Life into all the world and through all the ages, till His Body is completed and Its purpose fulfilled in all mankind. Into that Body we have been incorporated, and His Spirit has been given to us. It is essential to our spiritual well-being, and to our ability to function as Christ's members, that we never cease to draw the nourishment of our life from Him. Thinking along this line we see that we feed upon Christ from within His Body, not from without, as members and branches feed in the body and in the vine. This thought saves us from the perplexities that have raged round the question ever since it was first propounded by the Jews: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" We can feed upon Him because we abide in Him. Not from without, but because we are within Christ's Body, we can feed upon His Body. Because

not only has His blood been shed and His life laid down, but also because He had power to take His life again, because He is alive for evermore, therefore the Blood of the Lamb, which is the life thereof, is available for the life of His members.

If, then, we compare the constant supply of the perfect human life of Christ to His members, with the supply of physical life in our natural bodies through the circulation of the blood, the analogy holds, and is full of suggestive truth. Think for a while on the circulation of the blood as we know it. By the action of the heart there is sent continually, through no uncertain channels, but by definitely appointed vessels, the arteries, a stream of living blood to maintain the life of every member and organ and tissue in the body. The supply is accurately regulated according to the needs of each part, and fulfils three main purposes—cleansing, feeding, and immunising. Our members require cleansing and refreshing within as well as without, for in the ordinary day's work there is a continual breaking down and wasting of the tissues, and fatigue-products accumulate which are poisonous and cause the feeling

of stiffness and fatigue. These the clean fresh blood washes out and carries away in the veins, to be removed from the body through the lungs and otherwise. Even so in our spiritual life, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin." Conscious of failure, of fatigue of soul and weakness, of poisonous tendencies that need purging, of flagging life that needs refreshment, we open our souls to the inflow of Christ's Life to make us clean and fresh.

Again, just as the physical blood yields to all the tissues the food which they require for their upbuilding, and the renewal of their vital energy, so in Holy Communion we members receive the Life of Christ for our upbuilding, for the feeding and reinforcing of our life, for the renewing of power to serve. So on the night when He instituted the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, our Lord compared Himself and us to the Vine and the branches: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from Me



ye can do nothing.” Our power of spiritual work, of effective service, of successful accomplishment, depend upon our feeding on the Life of Christ. St Paul’s experience should be the experience of every communicant, “I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth Me.”

Further, there is in the natural circulation of the blood a protective provision of immunity from the attacks of disease. If any member or tissue is the object of a bacterial or poisonous attack, the whole economy of the body organises and equips an expeditionary force of blood-corpuscles, which attack, devour, and carry away the invading organisms, and neutralise by anti-toxins the poison which has found entrance. Of the heat and noise of the battle we are conscious, in the redness, swelling, pain, and heightened temperature of inflammation. The blood in normal health—our defensive force on a peace footing—should always be of sufficient strength to combat successfully any ordinary invasion of disease-germs. So effectively does the body do its work that multitudinous attacks of micro-organisms are successfully warded off daily without our having to take thought at all.



So again in the Body of Christ, we members who live in the experience of the Communion of His Life are so filled with heightened spiritual vitality, that the sins which so easily beset us are normally overcome and destroyed by Christ in us. Sometimes there is the fierce heat of the battle of temptation, but as health of spirit increases, the sin can find no answer to its appeal, no nidus in which to settle, no nourishment for its growth. The soul in Christ has become dead to sin, through being occupied entirely with Christ, and alive in Him to God. This accounts for the spiritual immunity which is characteristic of the saint, and which astonishes the world.

Thus by the definite channel of a priesthood ministering the mysteries of Christ, the spiritual food of all the members of Christ's Body is supplied, and none need starve who seek to receive Him for their upbuilding. It is this universal sharing of all the members in the one perfect Life that constitutes the Communion of Saints. That term, the Communion of Saints, is vague to us, just because the members of Christ's Body are not using as they should the unspeakable privilege of regular

Communion. In the early centuries the Lord's Day Communion of all Christians was the universal custom. Are there any difficulties big enough that we should suffer them to stand in the way of the re-establishment of that custom for the sake of the life of the whole Church of Christ?

But the Communion of Saints in the Eucharist is not merely a passive reception. It is the occasion of the exercise of glorious spiritual activity. In response to the invitation we "lift up our hearts unto the Lord." We find ourselves in our place in a vast congregation of spirits, not tied to one spot like Mt. Sinai, or Jerusalem below, or St Mary's Cathedral, but lifted into our spiritual place in the whole body of the faithful, in heavenly places, in the general assembly of the first-born, with the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, identified with Christ our Head in pleading before the Throne the merits of the eternal sacrifice of the Son for the sake of the whole world. With the angelic choir we join in adoration and praise, giving glory to Him Who sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb. By the activity of the Spirit within us we take

part in the intercession of Christ our great High Priest; and in His Body we offer ourselves to the Father, a living sacrifice for the service of God. What higher spiritual activity could we imagine than this sharing in the Eucharist with all Christ's members in adoration, worship, thanksgiving, intercession, and self-oblation? What else on earth can compare with it?

Lastly, with food and exercise the spirit like the body requires for its well-being rest. And the invitation to the Eucharist is voiced in our Lord's words: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We come out of the street, out of the roar and traffic and bustle and fatigue and strain and conflict which make up daily life on the plane of this world, and enter into the Presence-chamber, the Sanctuary of God. There the weariness is refreshed, the faintness revived, the depression dispelled, the flagging faith renewed, the courage reinforced, the power to persevere received. The balance weighed down by the pressure of the world's struggle with pain and sin is redressed by the superabundant weight of the grace of God supplied in the Body of



Christ. We find refuge under the Divine wings and rest awhile there in the tabernacle from the strife of tongues. Thence we come out again into the world with the sense that Christ's sacrifice is all availing, His love supreme, His grace sufficient, His protection certain, His strength vouchsafed. The threatening difficulties shrink to their true proportions as little inequalities in the ground on which we tread in the power and peace of Christ carried within us wherever we are called to go. Our wills are tuned to peace, because they have become attuned to the will of God. Our hearts are at peace because Christ our Desire has given Himself to us. Our minds are at peace because we know that nothing in earth or hell can separate us from the love of God which we have tasted in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It must follow that for anyone who realises the peace and joy of communion with Christ this wonderful sacrament will affect body as well as soul. Divine life, upon which all human and physical life is based, has flowed into the communicant to refresh the springs of his being. The cleansing and restoring of the soul will



tend to react upon the soul's instrument the body, and therefore it is not without intent that the Church puts into the priest's mouth the prayer: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, that was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." It is not, of course, *this* flesh that we expect to be preserved everlastingly; indeed it is changing every moment, as it is broken down and built up in the process of metabolism. But whatever body we may have we may expect to be refreshed and preserved as the outward counterpart of a soul which lives eternally by sharing the life of Christ. All that is essentially *me* must be preserved as long as I abide in Christ and He in me. His indwelling must produce health in its fullest sense of wholeness of being.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MINISTRY OF ABSOLUTION

WE are faced by an initial difficulty when we come to the consideration of this subject. For most of us, probably, have been brought up in an atmosphere of suspicious repugnance to the practice of auricular confession, and we are still surrounded by people who are utterly opposed to it, without having any first-hand experience on which to found their opinion. If we want to know the value of any remedy, whether for soul or body, we would naturally prefer to consult those who have practical experience of its use, rather than those who have none. And the Sacrament of Penance is essentially remedial, it is a medicine for the healing of the soul. It ought therefore to be obvious that the only people whose opinion is worth weighing as to the value of sacramental confession are those who have arrived at their judgment not by hearsay but by practice.

The subject may be considered in many aspects. I propose in this chapter to deal with two, the human need, and the Divine supply.

1. *The human need.* We have seen that man is essentially a God-conscious being. More or less aware of his relationship to God, he has within himself a sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility may be crude, uneducated, and ill-developed. Or it may be healthy, strong, and acute. On the other hand it may be falsely sensitive, hyperacute, and mistaken. If anyone is markedly deficient in the sense of responsibility, we call him insane, or undeveloped mentally.

This sense of responsibility, the constant witness to God's child that he has a duty to his Father, and to his Father's family, has something to say in every choice of the will. Its voice may be drowned in the clamour of desires; its witness may be suppressed and the consciousness of responsibility may become gradually weaker. But it is only suppressed, not destroyed. It is thrust down into the subconscious mind and there continues to work unnoticed and unregarded. It weaves itself into the

complexes about which the psychologists speak, and continues, in the forgotten memory of sins and failures, to mar our peace and weaken our mental energy. To forget the past is impossible ; every past act of the mind is a factor which contributes to the total condition of the mind to-day. To cut out a year, or a day, or a moment from our history would be, not a miracle, but a breach of the constitution of the universe ; it cannot be done :

“ The moving finger writes, and having writ  
Moves on ; nor all thy piety or wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.”

Every healthy thought, every kind word, every true choice and Christlike act, even the smallest, contribute to our eternal character, and “in no wise lose their reward.” And every sinful thought, word, or deed has left its everlasting mark. We are exactly what we have made ourselves by all our past choices, both good and evil.

The wounds in our souls, all those blemishes of character, some of which we know, and some of which we do not notice,



all alike cry out to God for healing. We may hear consciously the articulate wording of the cry. We may be acutely aware of some glaring defect or sin which we cannot dismiss from memory. Or the cry may not be articulate to our conscious mind, and we may know of it only as a sense of dissatisfaction and disgrace, or vague fear and spiritual discomfort, or feeling of weakness or failure, or a clouding of faith and cooling of love to God and man. And these spiritual maladies, whether we discern their nature or not, have an effect on mind and body, producing depressions and neurasthenic conditions, and physical pains, and I believe, in not a few cases, organic diseases. For the different sides of our nature constantly interact on one another, and the mind and the body are inevitably affected by our spiritual state.

Sin, then, is followed by soul-sickness which calls for a remedy. And no other remedy will suffice finally but the restoration of our true relationship with God. But we cannot restore that by our own unaided efforts, we cannot heal ourselves. Therefore the work of Atonement had to be initiated by God. For His love has never

changed, nor His understanding of our condition. Knowing whereof we are made, He still has such faith in us His offspring, that Jesus Christ gave Himself into the hands of man, to work their will on Him. And the love that on the Cross triumphed over all the malice of the universe, has made of that Cross the magnet to draw all mankind into the peace of God's forgiveness, and the happiness of His Home. Christ's scars are in heaven His chiefest glory, for they are perfectly healed, and remain only as "rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified," for their perfect healing is an eternal symbol that the Atonement is complete. The world's sins have done their worst upon Him; He bore the wounds but triumphed over them in dying. The poison of the sins is destroyed, and the healed scars remain, the eternal witness of the triumph of God's love. God does not forget, He does more, He forgives, and by His forgiveness turns Christ's wounds into glory, and the scars sing His love.

2. This brings us to the second point, *God's supply* in answer to man's need. Christ Jesus, Who as man bore the pain of the world's sin, proclaimed that He the

Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. That was His first step in administering health to the paralytic. And the essential note of the Gospel, which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, is that it is the Gospel of the remission of sins through the Name of Jesus Christ. In His last conversation in the upper room on the night of His betrayal, He impressed on His Apostles that they were ministers of His choosing, and not self-appointed; and added, "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." He tells them that they are to do the works that He has been doing. After His resurrection He told them that all authority had been given to Him in heaven and in earth, and then gave them His express commission while breathing the Holy Spirit upon them: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." The Christian ministry is clearly understood by the Apostles to be the ministry of divine gifts which the ascended Christ gave to man by His Spirit. They are the stewards of the mysteries of God, entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation.



Ever since the Apostles' time, the gift of the forgiveness of sins has been recognised as one of the essential gifts which the Church carries to mankind—a gift made possible by the Incarnation and Atonement, by Christ's appointment of the Apostolic Ministry, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit given to the Church to convey the gift in His power and name. Every priest at his ordination has the authority to administer God's forgiveness, solemnly imparted to him through the Laying-on of Hands, that wherever there is a congregation there should be at least one member of Christ's Body to exercise the ministry of reconciliation. The priest is not to throw this gift broadcast; there are times at which the gift must be withheld, because the sinner is not yet fit to receive it, through lack of repentance or faith or purpose of amendment. Therefore that the priest may be enabled to impart the remedy, He must know of the disease.

It is at this point that many who have no experience of the confessional object. Not recognising the priest as a divinely appointed physician of the soul, not recognising that the Holy Spirit has appointed



him, they say, why should I tell a man my sins? But who would go to a physician of the body and refuse to tell the symptoms or allow him to inquire into the malady? Even the mere unburdening of the soul in confession, apart from absolution, is a comfortable relief of the soul's tension; and every psychologist knows the value of such an unburdening. But there is much more than that. The confession is not to the priest but to God, in the sight of the whole company of heaven; and the priest is there to hear as representing the brotherhood of the Church. For the sins confessed, even sins of thought, are sins against the whole Body of Christ. And the pardon of God, which the priest conveys, carries with it reconciliation with the whole company of the Church. It restores him to fellowship in spirit both with God and man.

The penitent should clearly understand that the forgiveness pronounced is real. It is promised by Jesus Christ; it is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. It is there for him to receive. And we have already dealt with our part in making ready, so that we may be enabled to receive the sacramental gift without scruple or diffidence.

The psycho-analyst seeks to reach not only the troubles in the conscious mind, but also the hidden complexes in the subconscious. It is in dispute whether he really deals with fundamental things or not. But when he does reveal the hidden springs of mental and spiritual pain, he can only cure the evil finally if he can succeed in bringing the patient to true peace with God. Most psycho-analysts are not equipped for that. On the other hand, if the penitent has conscientiously confessed his sins as far as he honestly can, deliberately hiding nothing, there will be sufficient matter in the confession to enable the experienced priest to see further than the surface of consciousness, and his advice will be found to reach to the foundations. Every mental complex must ultimately find its solution in the realised presence of God, in the acknowledgment of sin before His mercy-seat, in the recognition of His redeeming love that covers all and destroys all sin, in the thankfulness that He has accepted our poor halting apology, and, forasmuch as we have nothing wherewith to pay our debt, freely forgives us. For His pardon and love cover all the past and present,

not only the little we remember, and reach down to the very roots of our being. If our penitence and trust are simple, if we give ourselves, withholding nothing, into His hands, knowing that only in His hands is there mercy and safety, then the converting power of His grace will flow as a cleansing stream through all our character. The lurking poisons are washed away, and the wounds, made clean, heal from the bottom. There remain the healed scars, never to be obliterated, for each scar now testifies, not to the sin, but to the love that healed it. Only diabolic pride would hide such scars. Humility wears them with gratitude, for in their healing the penitent has learned the supremacy of God's love.

## CHAPTER XII

### SACRAMENTAL HEALING

HAVING thought of the means provided by our Lord in His Church for the healing of the soul, we turn now to consider the sacramental healing of the body.

First let us be clear on two points: first, the body is not of chief but of secondary importance. The body is the spirit's dwelling-place and vehicle, its instrument and means of communication, and derives all its importance and sanctity from the spirit. Apart from the spirit the body is mere dust of the earth. Therefore to make the well-being and comfort of the body the chief end in life is a great mistake. We must not seek after religion for the sake of the body; rather we must be ready if need be to let our body suffer damage or even destruction for the sake of Christ. But we seek the health of the body in order to be able to render more efficient service to God in this life. The service



of God is the only final motive that is worthy of the Christian.

The second preliminary point on which we must be clear is this: our nature is one, not three; and the three sides of our nature, body, mind, and spirit, are not so separate or isolated that any of them can be completely considered without the others. And the condition of any one part affects the rest. If there is disease and disorder in one part, the whole man is affected and suffers. Therefore when our Lord came into the world to reveal the Father's will, He showed Himself as the Healer and Redeemer of the whole man, not only of a part. The human clay, the body fashioned of the dust of the earth, He took upon Himself, and kept it in perfect order and health because of His perfect obedience to the laws of nature, which are the laws of God. He took a human mind, like in every respect to our minds, except that He kept it in perfect order and peace of working by continual reliance on, and obedience to, God His Father. His human spirit He also kept in perfect health, unfaltering in His love to God and man, through un-

broken communion with His Father, and the habit of living in heaven while walking on earth. For the two are not separated by distance ; earth is part of the kingdom of heaven, as our Lord shows. Wearing human nature in its completeness, He ministered healing and restoration to the whole man. To the spirit of man He gave healing by His forgiveness of sins, and by opening spiritual channels of access to God by prayer and sacrament. To the mind He gave healing by His teaching of truth, by removing fears and obsessions and mental oppressions of all kinds, and by His gift of that full mental peace which is a certain accompaniment of trust in God. And to the body He laboured continually to give healing by curing those who suffered from all manner of diseases. He left no part of our nature untouched. He brought order and health and salvation to the whole man.

We can see, then, that our Lord gave healing to the body as one part of a ministry of restoration and redemption to mankind. And that ministry of restoration was by His command to be continued and carried by His Church to all the nations. There is

no hint that our Lord intended His salvation to be limited or contracted in its operation, but there is clear evidence of His positive command to minister to every side of human nature. His command: "Freely ye have received; freely give," was given in connection with a mission of bodily healing. The healing of the sick by spiritual means was to be one of the characteristic works of His Church, and bodily recoveries were to be among the signs that would "*follow* (not precede) them that believe." The command to heal was as definitely and clearly given as the command to preach the Gospel and forgive sins. And so the Apostles clearly understood it. Their message to the world was the present supremacy of the risen Christ over all things in heaven and earth, the destruction of the power of sin and disorder which Christ had wrought by His Incarnation and Atonement, and the presence of His Spirit enabling the members of His Church to live by His power and not their own. And in His Spirit the Apostles continued to do the works of Christ. SS. Peter and John healed the congenitally lame man at the Temple gate, not by physical



means, but by the power of the Name of Jesus Christ. St Paul healed the father of Publius of dysentery, and the impotent man at Lystra by the same power, the power of the Spirit of Christ. Just as our Lord's works of healing were wrought by spiritual means, so were the works of His Apostles. It was not by medical skill, not by scientific knowledge, nor even by holiness of character that the disciples healed. They healed by the power of Christ, invincible over all obstacles, still present in His Church, and using His members to do His restoring work.

There is no ground for supposing that the healing of the sick by spiritual means was a temporary gift to the Church, withdrawn at the close of the apostolic age. On the contrary, there is definite and abundant evidence that for several centuries such healing was an every-day practice in the Church. And it is significant that the apologists of the early centuries cited as evidence of the truth of Christian doctrine, not the miracles of our Lord's incarnate life, but the contemporary works of healing which the ministers of Christ were performing in every place. The signs continued to follow them that believed.



It was only later, when whole tribes were baptized on the conversion of their chiefs, when many pagan superstitions and practices were allowed to exist among people nominally Christian, when the standard of Christian faith and morals became lower, that the works of healing became fewer. But wherever, all down the centuries, there has been a clear and simple faith in God through Jesus Christ, wherever there has been a revival of religion, even till now, there has always been, as an accompaniment, a renewal of healing power manifesting itself among believers.

Out of many forms of healing in use in the early Church, two persisted and are in use to-day, viz. the Laying-on of Hands in the Name of Christ Jesus, and the Anointing with blessed oil. The first was used by our Lord, among the many means He employed, and it is recorded that He enjoined its use in sending out His Church into the world to continue to work in His Name and in the power of His Spirit. The second is in accord both with apostolic doctrine and practice. The twelve, we are told, anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them, and St James says

that if any are sick they are to send for the ministers of the Church, that they may be anointed in the Name of the Lord with prayer for their recovery, and that at the same time they may receive forgiveness of their sins.

The question arises, who were the ministers of healing? In the early Church, and still, two ministerial channels can be recognised. All bishops and priests, by virtue of their office, imparted healing by Unction and the Laying-on of Hands. But in addition, whenever any layman or woman was found endowed by the Holy Spirit with a gift of healing, the gift was recognised by the Church and the ministry of it was regularly authorised. It became a custom for the bishops to bless oil which the people took home and used for themselves and their families.

To-day, after much investigation and discussion and inquiry, a committee of the last Lambeth Conference (in 1920) recommended that the ministry of healing by anointing and the laying-on of hands with prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ, be restored, and in the revised form of the Scottish Prayer Book which is in preparation, the Service for the Visitation of the Sick provides a form for the ministry of Holy Unction, and

for the Laying-on of Hands. Thus we return to the primitive custom, and assert our belief that Jesus Christ is still alive and working in the Church of His Spirit.

It is of course true of sacramental healing as of every other sacramental rite, that the grace of the sacrament is received by faith. Over and over again our Lord emphasised the necessity of faith in connection with recovery. If faith flags, healing is delayed. If faith recovers, works of healing abound. It is for us to show our belief in Christ's promises by accepting His word and using the means of healing which He has provided. Then, as at all times, we shall find that "the signs will follow them that believe."

But it is obvious that the clergy cannot go about pressing the use of sacramental healing on those who have no desire for it or belief in it. St James' injunction is for those who are sick to *send for* the minister of healing. It is the duty of the clergy to make it known that sacramental healing is to be had; then it is for the people who believe in Christ's promises to apply in cases of need for the priest's ministrations.



One last point I would make clear. Does the use of spiritual means of healing involve the disuse of medicine and surgery? To my mind, certainly not. Medicine and surgery are God's gifts on the physical plane. They are of vast value, but they only minister to one side of our nature. Psychotherapy again is of vast value; it ministers to the mind. But body and mind are alike subordinate to the spirit. And spiritual healing, when it brings peace and order and health to the spirit, also resolves complexes in the mind, removes fear and anxiety, and gives mental peace. And mental and spiritual peace produce the conditions under which the natural vitality of the body can reassert itself and throw off disease. Bodily, mental, and spiritual healing are all of value; they are all God's gifts, to be used as such. But the greatest is spiritual healing.

*Note on Anointing.*—I am indebted to Dr Haig Ferguson for the loan of his paper on the Anointing of the Sick, in which he distinguishes between the two Greek words for anointing, *χρίω*, which carries the idea of consecration, as in *ὁ Χριστός*, and *ἀλείφω*, which refers to the medicinal use of unguents. He concludes that the injunction of St James to the elders of the Church is to employ physical remedies with prayer. The use of Holy Unction



would thus become a solemn blessing of the work of the doctor, with prayer for the patient's recovery, and absolution. While agreeing that this in itself would be a most valuable rite, I question if its meaning does not extend further. *Χρίω* also originally referred to a purely physical use of oil, its sacramental use developed later. This may be said of all sacramental vehicles, *e.g.* water, first used for washing, then for Holy Baptism; bread and wine, used first for food and drink, then for Holy Communion; the laying-on of hands, first no doubt an act of fatherly affection, then a solemn Blessing and Consecration. Our Lord takes the common things of earth, and fills them with a spiritual value; compare His use of clay for the blind man, touch for the sick in many instances, and the woman's touch of His garment's hem. Compare also Acts xix. 11, 12, "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them." St Paul would be the last to claim any healing virtue as inherent in his body, but he did realise his body as a much-used vehicle of the Holy Spirit. It may be said that these were all cures by suggestion or auto-suggestion. Our Lord called the woman's auto-suggestion "faith," and if He used physical vehicles to transmit a spiritual stimulus which, in union with the patient's faith, became effective for physical recovery, are not His disciples justified in doing likewise?

## CHAPTER XIII

### PRAYER

THE characteristic which distinguishes man from the other creatures on this earth is his consciousness of God. This gift of God-consciousness is a gift of the Holy Spirit, like all the gifts of life, and it carries with it the capacity to hold converse with God, of Whose presence we are aware. Prayer is converse with God, and the nature of our converse will depend upon our conception of what God is like. The savage sometimes threatens his idol with punishment if his god will not grant his requests. The child's idea of prayer—and how often the childish idea persists in the adult!—is based on his experience of his father. His father is wise and sometimes stern, but the child knows of certain childish wiles whereby he may entice his parent in a soft mood to let him have some indulgence which might otherwise be refused. Prayer becomes the persuasion of God to give us

our own way. The worst of this kind of prayer is that it sometimes succeeds, with disastrous consequence; "He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their souls." As our idea of God becomes enlarged, we come to believe more surely in Him as the God of Righteousness—"shall not the God of all the earth do right?"—and we cease to attempt to draw God from the path of right action. We grow in our conception of His love, and realise that the Divine love is not the petting of His favourites, as the Israelites were prone to suppose, but involves fatherly discipline. "You only have I known of all the nations of the world. Therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities," so runs the warning of the prophet of the Chosen Race, lest they forget that their election carries responsibility as well as privilege. As one grows out of tribalism and the narrow kind of nationalism, and the cramping limitations of class-interest, one comes to see that God loves all that He has made, that He cares for the savage as much as for the civilised, for the new-born child as for the adult, for the dull-witted labourer in the field as much as for the professor in the



university, for the black and brown and yellow as much as for the white. This last truth, so difficult for the modern European to learn, is symbolised in the glorious Cathedral at Chartres, where the Madonna and Child are portrayed in various forms, Negro and Asiatic as well as Western. Such symbolism is a valuable corrective to the habit of mind out of which many find it difficult to rise, those to whom it comes almost as a shock to realise that our Blessed Lord was no more British than Chinese, or rather that He is both British and Chinese; that He is the common possession of all races, and that He has opened the Kingdom of Heaven equally without distinction to all mankind. Still more difficult it is for many to grow out of the notion that God loves the righteous more than the wicked, the attitude of the good and earnest Pharisees. But the Cross should for ever dispel that mist of thought, for Christ died out of love for sinners. The contemplation of Christ victorious on the Cross enlarges our idea of the love, the righteousness, the patience, and the compassion of God, till the mind reels and the heart faints before the impossible effort to



comprehend or express the infinite greatness of the love and patience of Jesus Christ, God bearing in human flesh the responsibility and the pain for all His wayward children's sins.

“ No tongue of mortal can express,  
No letters write its blessedness ;  
Alone who hath thee in his heart  
Knows, love of Jesus ! what thou art.”

Christian prayer reaches its fulness by the light of the Atonement, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ has proved beyond all doubting that God's love is the supreme power in the universe ; for no compelling force could accomplish the task which Christ has accomplished for all mankind, and sends His Church to carry on for individuals, to draw by the magnet of His patient love the hearts and affections of men out of the mire of self-will into the joy of giving themselves a living sacrifice to serve God freely for love. The Spirit of Jesus teaches us that God's way is the best way, that in His will is our peace, that in His presence continually with us there is the fulness of joy. Moreover, we learn that the joy and the peace

which Christ shares with us are not affected by earthly circumstances. The peace which Jesus had in His mind gave Him perfect self-possession in His trial and torture; it was reached by His victory in the Garden, when at the cost of the Bloody Sweat He forced His human will into perfect alignment with His Father's will, and thereupon received by the angel's ministry an inflow of strength and peace that the concentrated malice of the universe could not break. While "the joy that was set before Him"—the prospect of winning man's freedom to enter heaven—was supreme over every torture and shame inflicted on His body and mind. Consequently, at the moment of acutest pain, as the nails were hammered through His flesh, and His body was set to hang upon its wounds, the malice could only draw from Him the retaliation of perfect pity, and the supreme prayer of intercession, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The great gifts, then, of love and joy and peace, the fruits which His Spirit plants and ripens in us, are proof against the most crushing adversity; their light shines the more brilliantly as darkness deepens without.

We learn from Christ to realise that there is no satisfaction in the gaining of our desires, unless our desires are for the accomplishment of God's purposes, because His purposes are best, and alone bring joy and peace. And as our appetite for God grows, we enlarge the scope of our prayers; we come to be satisfied with nothing less than the whole, and we pray with Julian of Norwich: "O God, give me Thyself, for if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth."

But there is nothing vague or indefinite about God's working. He is not short-sighted Who not only telleth the number of the stars, but also counts the hairs of our head. Nothing, not the tiniest need of the least of His children, escapes His notice, or is unregarded by His love. But He will not deny our freedom, nor paralyse our power, by doing all without our consent or co-operation. Therefore while He gives the world sufficient harvests and all the necessities of life, He does not force them upon us, but commands us to see to the equitable distribution of His gifts, and if mankind still groans because of covetousness and selfishness and idleness, God will



not interfere by force and rob us of our freedom, but waits in patient love till His children become willing to learn from Him how to love one another.

Until that lesson is learned, suffering must go on. But as the Christian learns to pray, he learns not to increase suffering by sin, but to relieve it by love, not to bear suffering with resentment, but to triumph in it as a member of Christ, using it to become more Christlike in sympathy and forbearance towards sinners who make suffering abound. But while he willingly bears one kind of suffering and cheerfully carries his share of the world's burden of pain, there is one cause of suffering in himself that he will seek to avoid. He will seek to avoid the failures *in himself* that entail suffering, failure to obey the laws of health, failure to maintain the peace of mind and of nerve that follow from trust in God, all failure to live by the grace of Jesus Christ in loving obedience to God, in loving service of man, and in consciousness of adequate power to triumph over all outward hindrances. That is, he will seek to avoid ill-health and breakdown, because it is not God's will that he should break down. Jesus Christ



has shown that disease is inimical to God ; it is man's enemy on the physical plane, as insanity is on the mental plane, and sin on the spiritual. Christ tolerated none of these enemies of man. He showed God's will to heal and to pardon. Therefore the believer in Christ will pray for healing and pardon because they are God's will. The Apostles were in no doubt as to the Lord's will to heal when, after their release with threatening from the chief priests, they prayed : " And now, Lord, behold their threatenings ; and grant unto Thy servants to speak Thy word with all boldness while Thou stretchest forth Thy hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done through the Name of Thy Holy Servant Jesus." They prayed thus because they knew that it was God's will to heal and to continue to do mighty works by their means through the Name of Jesus Christ. And nothing has ever happened since to make us suppose that God has changed His mind.

" The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." In all Christ's practice and teaching, and in His promises and commands, there is nothing

more clear and certain than that He healed all manner of diseases, and promised that they who believe in Him should be able to do the same. That the Apostles failed once, in the case of the demoniac boy, did not prevent them from succeeding later. All our failures in prayer, and in the ministry of God's gifts, must not frighten us from persevering. We are apt to be like Rhoda, who could not believe that it was really Peter at the door when they had just been praying for his deliverance from prison. And the signs that follow our little efforts of faith seem too great at times to believe. Though we fail often, we must continue, only using larger faith when less is unavailing.

“Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin, to set their captives free.” We know God's will to heal, we know Christ is the Saviour of our whole nature, we know the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The obstacles to victory are not of God's placing, they are there by the faithlessness of the fallen world. Then in spite of every difficulty we shall continue to pray that God's saving will may be done.

The apparently incurable recover, the

apparently dying are healed. Every doctor knows that. And the whole weight of our belief should be that God uses our prayers for the healing of the sick both in body and soul, that He blesses the skill of the physician and guides the surgeon's hand, that His gentleness is in the nurse's ministrations; and while these work from without, through prayer and sacrament the springs of life within are renewed and cleansed, and the sick man attains both peace of soul and restoration of mind and body.

But, in the cases where the prayers seem to fail, the sick will not curse his intercessors for their and his want of faith. He will be grateful for their efforts to help, and if his life is to be sacrificed because the Church's corporate faith is weak, he at least can die in love to God and his neighbours, and pass into the peace and rest and restoration beyond, which was unattained here. The prayers, if they have not had full effect for the body, will at least avail for the soul.

But we must not be content with partial success. Therefore, while the doctors study and find for their seeking better and better

means of physical treatment, while the psychologist seeks ever surer ways of ministry to a mind diseased, we must continue to use the spiritual means that Christ has provided, and co-operate with the Holy Spirit, along with physician, psychotherapist, and nurse, for the healing of all who are sick, that God's glory may be set forth in deliverance, and Christ's honour vindicated by the answers to faithful prayer.



## CHAPTER XIV

### MINISTERING TO THE SICK. *AD CLERUM*<sup>1</sup>

To those who have to minister to the sick a great opportunity is given, and to use that opportunity rightly requires preparation. We are ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and while we offer for God's service whatever gifts of skill we have, we have to remember that it is not merely our skill or wisdom, but the grace of God which we are to minister. We go because we are sent by the Spirit of God, and we are to be Christophoroi both in the active and in the passive sense, upheld ourselves by the power of Christ, and carrying His grace to the sick. By entrusting ourselves to the Holy Spirit we are saved from the diffidence, hesitation, and fear that would beset us if we went merely in our own persons, relying on our own wisdom or holiness. "St Patrick's

<sup>1</sup> This chapter, practically as it stands, has been issued as a pamphlet by the Guild of S. Raphael.

Breastplate " might well be put on when we set out to visit the sick.

When we reach the bedside it is important to remember that we are not so much concerned with the disease as with the patient. Forgetfulness of this fact often causes a check to faith, especially if the illness is grave and the prognosis is gloomy. It is possible to dwell so much on the gravity of the disease as to shut out the hope of recovery from our horizon. But it is to the person that we are to minister, to a spiritual being endowed with eternal life, a member of Christ whose life depends upon the maintenance of his union with our Lord. We have to minister divine gifts of grace to maintain that union, and repair it where it has become defective. The patient needs Christ's healing grace for all his being, and that grace is sufficient to supply all that is needed for spirit, mind, and body.

Realising ourselves as members of Christ, we desire that His presence should be known also to the patient. If others are there to assist in prayer we fall back on our Lord's promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I." Christ's message is ours: "Fear

not, only believe.” Believing ourselves, we are to lead the patient to trust the love of God, and to rely on His will to heal and deliver Him from all evil. The heart of the situation is that God is here in all His power and love and wisdom, and desires to make the sick man whole.

Our first aim, then, is to inspire the patient with a sense of God’s presence, and to help him to realise that God’s presence implies the presence of Almighty Love, and the peace which passes understanding. Our conversations will aim at encouraging faith and hope. There may be slowness to believe or to hope, owing to wrong thinking about God, or to sin producing fear, and these will require to be dealt with.

For a burdened conscience there is the benefit of absolution. As the patient comes to realise that God’s love is his in spite of his sin, true sorrow for sin, as distinguished from fear of punishment, will grow, and confession will come more easily. It is to be noted that the sins which lie at the root of the trouble may have passed from the conscious memory, and yet be at work in the sub-conscious mind. But when the patient has made the best con-



fession he can, he is to be assured that God accepts his apology, and that His loving forgiveness covers all sins whether remembered or forgotten. The pardoning love of God is to be trusted without misgiving.

After absolution the patient is able with a quiet mind to enter into our prayer entrusting him into the loving Hands of God, and to receive the ministration of the Laying-on of Hands in the Name of Jesus Christ. In this ministry we act as members of His Body, relying on His Spirit. It is He who makes all things new, and restores the sick by His gift of more abundant life.

The patient is now prepared for Holy Communion, wherein he is to expect the inflowing of the perfect life of Christ to cleanse and refresh and invigorate him both in body and soul.

We have also for the patient's aid the gift of Holy Unction, for use according to primitive custom for the healing of the body. Bishops are in many cases willing to bless oil for this purpose, and it would be well if blessed oil could be kept in readiness in every parish church.

We can also resort to the teaching of auto-suggestion for the development of active



faith. Psychologists are teaching us what saints have always known, that the trustful contemplation of God's Spirit at work helps the realisation of that work. M. Coué's formula: "Every day in every way I am growing better and better" repeated twenty times mechanically night and morning, *without any mental effort*, seems to have great potency to help the realisation of improvement both in mental and physical disorders. This can be used with a larger implication: "God has made me for eternal life because He loves me. I have been joined to the Lord Jesus in Baptism, I have received the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. He will not cease from His work until He makes me perfect in the likeness of Christ. He has led me to be sorry for my sins, to hate and confess them. He has shown to me the pardoning love of God. His work is going on within me now, in my body and soul. I give myself into His power, and by His work in me, never ceasing, day by day, in every way, I am growing better and better." We keep in mind in all that we teach that it is the healing of the person as a whole, not merely of one side of his nature, that Christ comes to give.

In every parish there must be some who would find themselves called to pray for their fellow-members of the Church in sickness. Why not have a branch of the Guild of St Raphael in every parish? Our Lord has given such definite promises to faithful prayer that we should not hesitate to act on them. Is it not fear that makes us hesitate to claim all that Christ promises?

Our ability to help the sick will depend on no small extent upon the teaching which has been given to the congregation as a whole. Our work will be made much easier if we have been able to bring home to the people with conviction the knowledge of the grace conveyed by the sacraments, *e.g.* Holy Communion, Absolution, and Holy Unction, and how their benefits are appropriated by faith. We are handicapped in some places by a tradition of false teaching concerning the gift of Absolution, and for fear of offence we may have hesitated to give clear teaching with regard to sacramental confession. But is it not more dangerous to withhold teaching which may be the means of saving life, than to risk offending some by speaking clearly? The words solemnly pronounced over us

when the ordaining hands were laid upon our heads give us our authority to minister forgiveness. If we make it plain that this ministry is a loving gift of God for the help of those who need it, and that its reception, like the reception of all God's loving gifts, is a matter of free will and not compulsion, we shall gain many who would otherwise go in want of this means of help.

The true activities of the Church are the activities of the Body of Christ. His Spirit is the agent and we are the members at His disposal. By ourselves we can do nothing, but by His Spirit we can carry out the work to which we are summoned. Our Lord has very plainly shown that for the successful ministrations of His gift of healing there must be trust in Him and prayer. We ought to have the same confidence in ministering the gift of healing as we have in ministering every other sacrament given in Christ's Church.

It may be that physical improvement will not follow, and the patient may have to leave his body. I do not think that necessarily means failure. If the sick man has come to peace with God, and has passed



in faith in God's love, may we not feel that he has both been delivered from his disease, and has passed into more abundant life beyond? But as our experience grows we shall be able to recall case after case in which patients, apparently past hope, have been enabled to recover, and have gained not only bodily health, but a sense of God's love and grace deeper than they had before.

If by our ministration of the Word and Sacraments we have enabled the patient to realise his communion with God through Jesus Christ, if he has come to commit himself without fear into the hands of his all-loving Creator, if he has come to this assurance, then henceforth no experience, whether here or beyond, shall ever be able to separate him from the love of God, upon Whose grace he may rely for ever; then, whether he leaves his physical body or remains for a time functioning in it, our task has been successfully accomplished. For he has attained health as we defined it at the beginning; he has gained inner peace and harmony, and has become happily adapted to his environment, *i.e.* to God in Whom he has his being.









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